

Biblical Topics

Ten Commandments - Sixth Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

What does God forbid in the Sixth Commandment?

God forbids the breaking of the marriage vow by unfaithfulness or desertion. Because God has joined this husband and wife together, they cannot break up this union without committing a grave sin. It is broken by fornication, unfaithfulness, or malicious desertion. In such cases the innocent party has God's permission, not command, to secure a legal divorce and is now free to marry another person.

- Matthew 19:6: So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.
- Matthew 19:9: I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.
- Hebrews 13:4: Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.
- 1 Corinthians 7:15: But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.

God forbids all unclean thoughts, desires, words and deeds. Practicing homosexuality, filthy talking, dirty jokes, suggestive movements of the body, lustful expressions of the eye, immodest dress and cherishing impure thoughts and desires fall into this category.

- Matthew 15:19: For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.
- Matthew 5:28: But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
- Ephesians 5:3-4: ³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴ Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.
- Ephesians 5:12: For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.
- Romans 1:24-27: ²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. ²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men

committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

What does God require of us in the Sixth Commandment?

There are two things to know before going into this part of each commandment:

First, one of the best ways to move away from wrong behavior or habits is to do the very opposite actions. Each of the commandments asks the question: What does this mean? Following that question and near the end of the explanation, Luther offers positive behaviors that would aid in doing a better task of following God's direction in this commandment. Work at practicing these.

Second, right after the question comes the statement, "we should fear and love God." In the commandments to "fear God" means to "stand in awe of Him," to revere, respect, esteem, and honor Him. We are NOT to shake in our boots from fright.

God requires that we should lead a pure and decent life in thoughts, desires, words, and deeds. Impure thoughts and desires sometimes do arise in our hearts against our will. We must not nurse and cherish them, but suppress them by: 1) thinking of God and His Word, 2) sincere prayer, asking God to give us a clean heart, 3) keeping ourselves occupied, having our mind on our work, and 4) being temperate, moderate, in eating and drinking. We must not expose ourselves to temptation and therefore avoid places where we are likely to be tempted to such sins.

- Luke 6:45: The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.
- Genesis 39:9: No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?
- Psalm 51:10: Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- Proverbs 23:31-33: ³¹Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! ³²In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. ³³Your eyes will see strange sights and your mind imagine confusing things.
- 1 Corinthians 6:18: Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.
- 2 Timothy 2:22: Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.
- 1 Corinthians 6:19: Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;
- Proverbs 1:10: My son, if sinners tempt you, do not give in to them.

The above information is taken from: "Luther's Small Catechism" annotated by Edward W. A. Koehler.