

# Words from the Fire: Word #7

8.15.2021

Introduction: Your salvation is more important than your feelings.

A. I can't think of a message that I have wrestled with more than this one.

1. The content, the delivery, the motivation, the research.
2. I confess feeling a weightiness to this message that is unusual for most sermons.

B. Part of the trouble involves me getting over myself.

1. I confess that I struggle with what you think of me.
2. But here it is:
3. I have to love you more than I love myself.
4. And part of that process involves me telling you the truth as lovingly and as clearly as possible.

C. Let me tell you what the goals are for today.

1. First, if you are living in violation of Word #7, I want you to stop.
  - a. Stop today.
  - b. None of us are guaranteed tomorrow, and walking in willful sin is the most dangerous thing we can do.
2. Second, I want to provide real resources for those who are struggling.
  - a. In fact, I'm going to put my money where my heart is today by providing real resources to help you overcome.
  - b. Because this life is too short, and eternity too long, for us not to do whatever it takes to overcome sin in our lives.

3. Third, I want to remind all of us that Jesus paid the price for all of our sin, and remind us that He provides forgiveness, grace, and empowerment to live for Him in this fallen world.

D. Today, I take the position of a Pastor with a prophetic message.

1. It is prophetic because believe the Holy Spirit is calling us out of our darkness and into His light.

2. So I will choose to sit, because I am not above you nor beneath you in bringing this message: For I also am in need of the Blood of Jesus.

3. I have dressed casually on purpose.

4. We have split the song-service in half so that the last half provides time for us to respond and linger with Jesus.

## TEXT

### **Exodus 20:14 (CSB)**

<sup>14</sup>Do not commit adultery.

### **Matthew 5:27–30 (CSB)**

<sup>27</sup>“You have heard that it was said, **Do not commit adultery.** <sup>28</sup> But I tell you, everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup> If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup> And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

### **1 Corinthians 6:9–11 (CSB)**

<sup>9</sup>Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God's kingdom? Do not be deceived: No sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, or males who have sex with males, <sup>10</sup> no thieves, greedy people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, or swindlers will inherit God's kingdom. <sup>11</sup> And some of you used to be like this. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

## 1. Let's start with this foundation:

A. According to the words of Jesus, ALL of us have broken the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment.

1. Whether through adultery, fornication, or lust, we are all guilty.
2. All of us have felt the consequences of sexual sin from people in our lives.
  - a. Maybe our parents broke up because of sexual sin.
  - b. Maybe you have had the phone call from a close friend who caught their spouse cheating or looking at porn.
  - c. I know the pain of having colleagues caught in sexual sin, and witnessing them leave the ministry, leave their families, and leave a broken and hurting church in their wake.

B. The church does not help matters when we refuse to talk about the pervasiveness of sin WITHIN the church.

- a. We love to wail on homosexuality.
- b. We love to scare our teens into purity.
- c. Then we neglect the sinfulness of our lives.

C. Sobering **Statistics for the state of sexual sin in America.**

1. "An issue of Marriage and Divorce journal also stated that 70% of all Americans engage in some kind of affair sometime during their marital life."<sup>1</sup>
2. 30% of Protestant ministers admit to having sexual relationships with women other than their wives.
3. 13% of Southern Baptist ministers "had sexually inappropriate relationships".

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<sup>1</sup> <https://hernorm.com/infidelity-statistics/>

4. 80% of women and 98% of men have fantasies about someone other than their partner.
5. 64% of Christian men and 15% of Christian women say they watch porn at least once a month.<sup>2</sup>
6. 1 in 7 senior pastors use porn on a regular basis and currently struggling. That's more than 50,000 U.S church leaders.
7. According to a survey conducted by the Barna Group in the U.S. in 2014 and 2016

The following percentages of men say they view pornography at least once a month: 79% of 18-30 year olds; 67% of 31-49 year olds; 49% of 50-68 year olds.

The following percentages of men say they view pornography at least several times a week: 63% of 18-30 year olds; 38% of 31-49 year olds; 25% of 50-68 year olds.

The following percentages of women say they view pornography at least once a month: 76% of 18-30 year olds; 16% of 31-49 year olds; 4% of 50-68 year olds.

The following percentages of women say they view pornography at least several times a week: 21% of 18-30 year olds; 5% of 31-49 year olds; 0% of 50-68 year olds.

D. Scripture and Statistics tell me that we have an issue with the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment.

## 2. God understood the pervasiveness of sexual sin.

A. God prepared the Israelites to be priests instead of slaves by setting a boundary around marriage and family.

1. We could say it like this:
2. We are to honor our parents, honor each other, and honor our spouse.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.covenanteyes.com/pornstats/>

3. Where there is no honor, there will be infidelity.

B. Even the Egyptians understood this.

1. The Egyptians called adultery “the Great Sin”.
2. What God is introducing to Israel is not a new concept.
  - a. This Commandment is not a blindside.
  - b. God is not being unfair.
  - c. He is declaring what is self-evident: Adultery is wrong.

C. Americans have bought into a theological lie regarding sin.

1. We like to treat all sin the same.
2. But this simply isn't true, and that is evident in both Scripture and in Society.
  - a. Every human law recognizes this transcendent principle by assuring the “punishment fits the crime”.
    1. The penalty for murder is greater for petty theft.
    2. Accidental or unwilling killing may result in manslaughter and a short prison sentence whereas premeditated murder could result in life in prison or execution.
  - b. **Throughout the Old Testament Law, the greater the sin the greater and more costly the sacrifice.**
  - c. But some sins could not be atoned for by an animal sacrifice.
    1. These sins required nothing less than the death of the one who sinned.
    2. God's instructions to Israel in Numbers 15 regarding blatant sin shakes me to my course.

**Numbers 15:27–31**

<sup>27</sup>“If one person sins unintentionally, he is to present a year-old female goat as a sin offering. <sup>28</sup>The priest will then make atonement before the LORD on behalf of the person who acts in error sinning unintentionally, and when he makes atonement for him, he will be forgiven. <sup>29</sup>You are to have the same law for the person who acts in error, whether he is an Israelite or an alien who resides among you.

<sup>30</sup>“But the person who acts defiantly, whether native or resident alien, blasphemes the LORD. That person is to be cut off from his people. <sup>31</sup>He will certainly be cut off, because he has despised the LORD’s word and broken his command; his guilt remains on him.”

Then the writer of Numbers gives us an example.

### **Numbers 15:32–36**

<sup>32</sup>While the Israelites were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day. <sup>33</sup>Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses, Aaron, and the entire community. <sup>34</sup>They placed him in custody because it had not been decided what should be done to him. <sup>35</sup>Then the LORD told Moses, “The man is to be put to death. The entire community is to stone him outside the camp.” <sup>36</sup>So the entire community brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

3. Some of you are dismissing these verses already because they are Old Testament.

a. Yet, Jesus told the Woman at the well, “Go and sin no more”. Forgiveness had come to her, but she had to live in that forgiveness instead of her sin.

b. The Apostle Paul wrote this warning in Romans 6:1–2 (CSB)

**6** What should we say then? Should we continue in sin so that grace may multiply? <sup>2</sup>Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

c. **Grace does not give us permission to continue in sin.**

D. What about my comment about not all sin is the same?

## 1. All sin separates, but not all sin has the same consequences.

1 Corinthians 6:12–20 (CSB)

<sup>12</sup>“Everything is permissible for me,” but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me,” but I will not be mastered by anything. <sup>13</sup>“Food is for the stomach and the stomach for food,” and God will do away with both of them. However, the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. <sup>14</sup>God raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. <sup>15</sup>Don’t you know that your bodies are a part of Christ’s body? So should I take a part of Christ’s body and make it part of a prostitute? Absolutely not! <sup>16</sup>Don’t you know that anyone joined to a prostitute is one body with her? For Scripture says, **The two will become one flesh.** <sup>17</sup>But anyone joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.

<sup>18</sup>Flee sexual immorality! Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the person who is sexually immoral sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup>Don’t you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup>for you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body.

### 2. The Apostle makes two stunning connections to sexual sin:

a. First, it is a sin against our own body.

b. Second, our body belongs to Christ.

c. Therefore, adultery, more than other sins, violates the body of Christ and the image of Christ within us.

E. Throughout the Old Testament, God connects idolatry and adultery together.

1. To worship idols was to be spiritually adulterous.

2. To be adulterous was to be an idolater.

3. Large portions of the Prophets tell this message and the whole book of Hosea.

F. The New Testament takes this picture further.

**1. Because the Holy Spirit lives within us, when we commit sexual sin, we are sinning against the Body of Christ.**

2. This is what Paul was addressing in 1 Corinthians 6.

3. So what I'm sharing can be confirmed by another witness, let me share what pastor Philip Ryken:

The New Testament deepens the mystery by defining marriage in terms of our relationship to Jesus Christ. Paul quotes from Genesis: "A man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Eph. 5:31). Then he adds this comment: "This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church" (v. 32). In other words, the union between husband and wife exemplifies the union between Christ and his church.

This has major implications for our sexuality. **For the Christian, every act of sexual immorality is a kind of spiritual desecration. It is an offense against God the Son.** "The body is not meant for sexual immorality," Paul told the Corinthians, "but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.... Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?" (1 Cor. 6:13b, 15a). If this is true—if our bodies are in Christ and for Christ—then sexual immorality is a sin against God the Son. Paul continues: "Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with [p 632](#) her in body? For it is said, 'The two will become one flesh.' But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit" (vv. 15b–17). For Christians to have sex with someone who is not a spouse is to violate the holiness of their union with Christ. We show our covenant loyalty to God by maintaining our sexual fidelity to our spouse (or our future spouse).

Sexual sin also dishonors the Holy Spirit. Paul goes on to say this: "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. 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; you were bought at a price.



Therefore honor God with your body” (vv. 18–20). Our bodies were purchased for God when Christ died on the cross. Now they are inhabited by God’s Spirit. This means that whatever we do with our bodies is directly related to our fellowship with the triune God. In addition to damaging ourselves and others, committing adultery dishonors the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. By now, I think we are grasping how serious sexual sin is.

A. Jesus said that even the root of sinful, sexual actions starts with sinful thoughts.

1. Jesus, using metaphorical language, says that we are to do whatever we need to stop.
2. Jesus said it is better to enter the Kingdom maimed than to enter hell whole.

B. How serious is sexual sin?

1. It cost Jesus His life.
2. Jesus paid the price for all of our sin, and that includes our sexual sin.

C. Here’s the good news in someone else’s words:

So often when we break the seventh commandment, we feel so guilty that it is all we can do to drag ourselves back to the cross, when what we ought to do instead is to run back to the cross and confess our sin. At the cross we can find a sacrifice for our sin, with cleansing for our guilt and the power to start living again for Christ.

When God confronts us with the guilt of sexual sin we have a choice. If we keep hiding our sin, we may be sure that it will destroy us in the end. But if we repent of our sin, God will have mercy. In a sermon on adultery, Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, “Even adultery is not the unforgivable sin. It is a terrible sin, but God forbid that there should be anyone who feels that he or she has sinned himself or herself outside the love of God or outside His kingdom because of adultery. No; if you truly repent and realize the enormity of your sin and cast

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<sup>3</sup> Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, *Exodus: Saved for God’s Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 631–632.

yourself upon the boundless love and mercy and grace of God, you can be forgiven and I assure you of pardon.”

Lloyd-Jones could have stopped there, but he added this comment: “But hear the words of our blessed Lord: ‘Go, and sin no more.’ ”<sup>4</sup>

1. Earlier in 1 Cor 6, Paul said that we used to be all of these sinners.

2. But now, through Jesus, we are washed, sanctified, and justified.

3. The sin we could never cover up, a sin we could never undo, the sin we could never take back, Jesus has cleansed us from.

a. IT’s like with some dirty laundry:

b. What was once dirty is now washed, folded, and put away.

c. We have been made clean from all of our unrighteousness.

D. **No matter your past, you are redeemable.**

1. No matter your sin, Jesus Paid it all.

2. No matter your hurt, Jesus can heal it all.

3. No matter where you came from, Jesus can change where you are going.

4. Jesus knows how to save the Mary Magdalene’s and the Women at the wells.

a. Jesus knows how to change men from abusers to protectors.

b. **Jesus knows how to change men from lusts to lovers.**

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<sup>4</sup> Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, *Exodus: Saved for God’s Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 640.

Closing: I realized this week that I have to love you enough to tell the truth, and to be ok with your response.

A. I also felt very strongly that it would not be enough for me to preach this message and to leave it at that.

1. As pastor, I have to find a way for God's people to stop walking in sin.
2. And hearing a message without application was not going to be enough.

B. **If there is anyone today who has been putting off marrying the person they are living with and sleeping with, and God has been convicting you of this sin, here is what I'm willing to do:**

1. You go to the Courthouse and get your marriage license.
2. Bring me the license and the receipt, and we will do your wedding ceremony on a Sunday morning, for free and pay you back for the license.
3. Then you can get fancy and do a huge reception or party or whatever you are doing. But if you are ready to get your relationship under the Blood of Jesus, and be legal before God and man, we will remove that barrier for you.
4. Just tell me. And this whole congregation will celebrate with you on that day.

C. If you are struggling with pornography, and you are ready to break the cycle, I want to do something very practical for you:

1. I want to help you pay for a year's subscription to Covenant Eyes or NetNanny and help place you with an accountability partner who knows the struggles you are facing.
2. If that is you, man or woman, text me.
3. I will keep this absolutely confidential and will set up a time with you to make arrangements for your subscription and accountability partner.

4. If you are willing to be someone's partner, and walk through that with them, text me.

D. Lastly, I have set the last of our time together today aside so we might respond in prayer and worship.

1. **As the Worship team joins me,** and we all stand, if God is speaking to you today, please don't delay.

2. I won't ask you to walk up front, but isn't your marriage and your salvation worth being embarrassed about for a moment?

3. If your spouse is with you today, pray with them.

4. The Apostle Paul said, "FLEE from Sexual immorality."

a. Don't put up with it.

b. Don't tolerate it.

c. Don't baby it.

d. Don't enable it.

e. Flee.

f. Put on your running shoes, and Flee.

5. Let's PRAY.