

Fornication

I. Introduction & Definition

A. English terminology

1. fornication: n. (14th cent) *consensual sexual intercourse between two persons not married to each other*. Late Latin *fornicatus*, past participle of *fornicare* to have intercourse with prostitutes, from Latin *fornic-*, *fornix* arch, vault, brothel.
2. adultery: voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and someone other than his wife or between a married woman and someone other than her husband.
3. harlotry: *sexual profligacy; prostitution*. Lev. 19:29
4. incest: *sexual intercourse between persons so closely related that they are forbidden by law to marry*.
5. bestiality: *sexual relations between a human being and a lower animal*.
6. homosexuality: *sexual intercourse between persons of the same sex*.

Note: the overall concept is fornication: sexual contact outside of the marriage covenant. Every other term is a subcategory of fornication.

B. Hebrew terminology

1. זָנָה *zanah* #2181: *commit fornication; be a harlot*; זְנוּנוּיִם *z'nuwuiym* #2183: *fornication*; זְנוּוּת *z'nuwuth* #2184: *fornication*; תַּזְנוּוּת *taznuwuth* #8457: *fornication*. ptc. זֹנֶה *zownah* *harlot*.
2. נִאְוָה *na'aph* #5003: *commit adultery*; נִאְוָה *ni'uph* #5004: *adultery*.

C. Greek terminology

1. πορνεία #4202: *illicit sexual intercourse; fornication*; πορνεύω #4203: *to commit fornication*; πόρνη #4204: *harlot*; πόρνος #4305: *male fornicator*.
2. μοιχάω #3429 & μοιχεύω #3431: *to commit adultery*; μοιχεία #3430: *adultery*; μοιχός #3432: *adulterer*; μοιχαλίσ #3428: *adulteress*.

D. Marriage was designed by God as the perfect Divine provision for mankind's sexual needs (1st Cor. 7:2).

II. Development & Application

A. Godly sexual activity satisfies (Prov. 5:15-19), but sinful sexual activity does not (Prov. 5:20-23).

1. A wife is a protected and tended (cistern, well) provision for sexual activity (water) (v.15).
2. A husband's sexual activity (water) must be conserved & dedicated to his own wife (v.16) and not allowed to flow in an uncontrolled manner (v.17).
3. This is the pattern for sexual health (v.18a) and youthful perspective (v.18b).
4. Marital sexual activity becomes legitimately intoxicating (v.19). שָׁגַח *shagah* #7686: *swerve, meander, reel or roll in drunkenness*.
5. Failure to pursue marital "intoxication" leads to extramarital intoxication (v.20). See the vital link between "flee" and "pursue" (2nd Tim. 2:22).
6. No matter how sneaky the adulterer thinks he is, God is always aware (v.21; 1st Thess. 4:6; Heb. 4:13; 13:4).
7. Fornication is spiritually and mentally enslaving (v.22 cf. Heb. 12:1).
8. Unrepentant fornication leads to the Sin Unto Death (v.23; 1st Jn. 5:16).

B. Passing pleasures of sin (Heb. 11:25).

1. πρόσκαιρος #4340: *lasting only for a time, temporary, transitory* (Matt. 13:21; 2nd Cor. 4:18).
2. ἀπόλαυσις #619: *having the benefit of something, and so enjoying it, enjoyment* (1st Tim. 6:17).
3. ἁμαρτία #266: *sin, missing the mark*.

C. Explicit Biblical Instructions

1. The 7th Commandment: Thou shalt not commit adultery.
 - a. נִאְוָה לֹא *lo' tin'aph*.
 - b. neg.part. לֹא *lo'* #3838 + qal.imperf. נִאְוָה *na'aph* #5003: *commit adultery*.
 - c. With the imperfect, especially with 2ps, לֹא *lo'* expresses a prohibition.
2. Levitical Code Civil Punishments (Lev. 20:10-16)
 - a. The penalty for extramarital fornication is death for all participants (v.10).
 - b. The penalty for incestuous fornication is death for all participants (vv.11,12). This alternative/variant/deviant preference is called a תֵּבֵל *tebel* #8397: *confusion, violation of nature* (Lev. 18:23; 20:12).

- c. The penalty for homosexual fornication is death for all participants (v.13). This alternative/variant/deviant preference is called a תועבה to'ebah ^{#8441}: *abomination* (Lev. 18:22; Prov. 6:16).
 - d. The penalty for incestuous polygamy is death for all participants (v.14 cf. 18:17,18).
 - e. The penalty for bestial fornication is death for all participants (vv.15,16).
 - f. Rampant sexual promiscuity in a land defiles the physical geography itself (Lev. 18:24-28).
3. 5 Passages from Proverbs (Prov. 2:16-19; 5:3-23; 6:24-35; 7:6-27; 9:13-18)
- a. Proverbs 2. The believer walking according to wisdom will be delivered from the evil man (Prov. 2:12-15), and the strange woman (Prov. 2:16-19), and will enjoy God's blessings with good men & women (Prov. 2:20-22).
 - b. Proverbs 5
 - 1) The seductress is seductive (v.3).
 - 2) Only spiritually, through wisdom, does the believer see the ugliness of it (vv.4-6).
 - 3) Extremity is the key (v.8), as proximity is the danger (vv.9-14).
 - 4) Marriage is God's provision for sexual blessing and happiness (vv.15-19; Song of Solomon; 1st Cor. 7:2-5).
 - 5) There is no secrecy from God's judgment (vv.20-23).
 - c. Proverbs 6 stresses the foolishness (lack of wisdom) of the man who goes to the harlot or the adulteress (Prov. 6:20-35).
 - 1) Wisdom teaches and guards the believer (vv.20-23).
 - 2) The foolishness of fornication denies consequences, when the consequences are inescapable (vv.24-35).
 - d. Proverbs 7
 - 1) Having a one-spirit relationship with the Lord helps defend the believer against the one-flesh relationships of sexual immorality (vv.1-5; 1st Cor. 6:15-20).
 - 2) Solomon uses the example of a foolish young man to teach his sons (vv.6-27).
 - 3) The warning is summarized (vv.24-27). She has had many victims before you, and will have many more after you.
 - e. Proverbs 9 contrasts the gracious, life-giving provision of Wisdom (vv.1-12) with the lustful, life-stealing enticement of Folly (vv.13-18). The Message contrasts "Lady Wisdom" with "Madame Whore."

D. Case examples

- 1. Homosexual fornication is illustrated by the Sodomites (Gen. 19) and gives us the term sodomy to this day.
- 2. Incestual fornication is illustrated by Lot's daughters (Gen. 19:30-38).
- 3. Extramarital fornication (adultery) is illustrated by David & Bathsheba (2nd Sam. 11).

III. Summary & Conclusion (1st Cor. 6:9-20)

- A. Whatever sexual and nonsexual sins committed as an unbeliever are taken care of by the blood of Jesus Christ at the moment of salvation (1st Cor. 6:9-11).
- B. After salvation, the goal of believers is to volitionally serve the Lord (all things profitable), and not any other master (1st Cor. 6:12).
- C. The Lord's work of Redemption benefitted not only soul and spirit, but also the body (1st Cor. 6:13-20).
 - 1. We have the promise of the resurrection to look forward to (v.14).
 - 2. We are espoused in marriage to Christ (v.15a). We presently function in a one-spirit relationship with Him (v.17).
 - a. Only sexual relations that portray our union to Christ are acceptable.
 - b. Sex outside of marriage defiles that image (v.15b,16).
 - 3. Sexual sin is unique among all other forms of sin in that fornication produces bodily defilement (v.18 cf. 2nd Cor. 7:1).
 - 4. God the Father purchased us with the blood of His Son, and designated us as a temple of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we are exhorted to use our bodies for the Father's glory (v.20).