



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC Ensuring Relationships are Right

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THEME Family Relationships

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

ENSURING RELATIONSHIPS ARE RIGHT

“Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.” (Heb 13:4)

Hebrews 13:1-5 is an exhortation from Paul that focuses on relationships. Hebrews 13:4 contains a warning in which God will judge the adulterous and sexually immoral. This shows the significance of marriage in God’s eyes; He created it as a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman. Although the verse is about marriage, the principles are applicable for both singles and married couples. From it, we can learn about God’s expectation for marriage, what defiles the marriage bed and the consequences of defilement. The consequences of defilement are severe – but with God, there is always hope for restoration.

MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO THE WORD

1. God’s Expectation for Marriage

In verse 4, Paul states clearly the expectation of God with regards to marriage – that it is to be honoured by all. How do we honour marriage?

First, we must uphold the rule of permanency. Marriage is created by God as a covenant and is never meant to be a disposable item as what society commonly views it as today. One needs to have the resilience to work things out when problems within marriages arise.

Second, we must obey God’s commands on the roles and responsibilities of husbands and wives. A husband must lead and love his wife while a wife is to submit to her husband (Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18-19).

Third, we need to understand God’s divine purpose for marriage as one man and one woman in one marriage. This was His intention right from the start when He created Adam and Eve.

And fourth, it is a union of two in the Lord. This means that we should not be unequally yoked with a non-believer (2 Cor 6:14; 1 Cor 7:19).

2. What Defiles the Marriage Bed

Another expectation of God with regards to marriage is that the marriage bed *cannot* be defiled. In verse 4, the words “honour” and “adulterer” are linked. A person cannot honour the marriage bed if he or she is an adulterer/adulteress – in a relationship with another outside of the marriage covenant. The words “pure” and “sexually immoral” are linked as well, because purity means that one is free from the contamination that is sexual immorality.

What defiles the marriage bed? In the Bible, sexual immorality includes adultery, fornication, incest, bestiality, homosexuality, prostitution, lustful passion, orgies, sodomy, obscenity and coarse language. Adultery breaks the principle of “the two shall become one flesh” (1 Cor 6:16). In addition, in a marriage, our sexual pleasures are to benefit our spouse and not ourselves. This is an obligation in marriage (1 Cor 7:3). Sexual immorality goes against this obligation.

3. Consequences of Defilement

The consequences of defilement are numerous and dire. They go beyond the physical and emotional into the spiritual. Physical examples include abortion and the lives of children being affected. Emotional examples include trust issues, guilt, rejection, loss of self-worth by the victim. Spiritual examples include ungodly soul ties and SOFC to future generations.

4. Hope and Restoration

A person who once practised or is still practising sexual immorality can still find hope. This is the beauty of God – He is our Restorer. God forgives the repentant and will restore a person’s life and relationship with his/her spouse even when all seems lost (1 Cor 6:11; 1 John 1:9).

CONCLUSION

Marriage is sacred; God created it as a covenant between one man and one woman in union with the Lord. Hebrews 13:4 therefore tells us that we must honour marriage and we will be judged if we do not do so. Hence, we must be watchful not to defile the marriage bed through sexual immorality.

Three common areas in which people fall into sexual immorality that defile the marriage bed are adultery, premarital sex and pornography. The consequences of sexual immorality are dire. They are not only physical and emotional but spiritual as well. However, there is hope even for a person who has once fallen or is practising sexual immorality. God is our Restorer. When we come to Him, repentant, God will forgive and restore our lives and marriages.

QUESTIONS

How does sexual immorality defile the sacredness of marriage and individuals?
What is *purity* and how does it help us in our relationship with God and His people?

Do you know of anyone who is currently facing issues with his/her marriage or sexual immorality? What do you think are the root causes? Do you see any consequences from these in their relationships – with God, with their spouse, or with others?

There is hope and restoration in the Lord. Do you know of anyone who has gone through difficulties with regards to sexual sins and/or their marriage? What can you learn from how they overcame and found their freedom in the Lord?