

עֲשֵׂרֵת הַדְּבָרִים Word Number Seven – לֹא תִנְאַף

THE SEVENTH WORD IS: *lo tin-af* “You shall not commit adultery”

Marriage is the foundation of any godly society. Communities that desire to remain faithful to the Lord from one generation to the next, must realize that this can only be accomplished when there is a commitment to building marriages according to God’s pattern as laid down in the Scriptures.



Marriage is built upon a mutual commitment between the husband and wife that their relationship will remain exclusively for each other. When the patriarchs of old bent to the ways of the nations around them and practiced polygamy (having more than one wife), the exclusive relationship between husband and wife so foundational to marriage was greatly compromised, and in every case this brought trouble and disharmony. When HaShem revealed the Torah at Mt. Sinai, He made it clear in the Ten Words that a husband and wife are to remain exclusively for each other without any similar relationship with anyone else. This was so important in God’s moral teaching that He prescribed capital punishment to anyone who engaged in adultery.

Adultery is defined as having a physical relationship with someone else who is married or betrothed. Fornication is defined as committing any sexual act outside of those boundaries prescribed by God as proper. Thus, fornication is the broader term under which adultery is one category.

Not only is marriage the foundation of godly society and community, it is also given to us as the primary illustration of God’s relationship with His chosen people. When Israel engaged in idol worship, God likened her to an unfaithful wife who committed adultery with false gods. Since Israel was viewed as married to HaShem, her involvement with the worship of other false gods constituted spiritual adultery. Yeshua and His Apostles taught the same lesson. Paul, for instance, makes it clear that the relationship of marriage is a direct revelation by God to His people of their relationship with the Messiah (Eph 5:32). In order for this revelation of God to be passed on from generation to generation, we must maintain our marriages in fidelity and strive to portray to our children the beauty and vitality that exists in a righteous marriage.

Breaking this commandment: We break this commandment by:

- 1) failing to remain faithful to our spouse or to the one to whom we are betrothed
- 2) allowing ourselves to entertain improper relationships outside of our marriage
- 3) engaging in activities that weaken our marriage and make us vulnerable to the temptation of fornication which leads to adultery

Strengthening this commandment: We obey this commandment by:

- 1) consistently committing ourselves to an exclusive relationship with our spouse
- 2) guarding ourselves from thoughts or situations that might lead to fornication or adultery
- 3) consistently working to strengthen our marriages and practicing forgiveness toward our spouse in order to guard against anything that would weaken our relationship of love and friendship.