

## DEVOTIONAL AID FOR 26 APRIL 2021 – 2 MAY 2021



**UPPER  
HUNTER**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dear church family,

We returned to the Heidelberg Catechism from last week, and this week, we are looking at Questions and Answers 108 and 109. These are about the seventh commandment, “You shall not commit adultery.” (Exodus 20:14) If one thought it was too easy to keep the sixth commandment, “You shall not murder” (which is not the case, as we saw last week), one may think it is impossible to keep the seventh commandment. Indeed, as Kevin DeYoung observes, this may well be the most ridiculed command in our culture.<sup>1</sup>

In our day and age, we may even be seen as people full of hate, simply because we hold to God’s instructions in the Bible in the areas of sexual ethics. Some “Christians” also try to minimise the scope of the sexual sin as if the gospel means we do not need to admit or confess our sins anymore. But the gospel is not a denial of sins, but forgiveness of sins to all who confess, repent, and trust in Jesus. We may do well to remember that it was Jesus who spelt out how the seventh commandment applies so pervasively and forcefully:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 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 your members than that your whole body go into hell. (Matthew 5:27–30)

To heed to Jesus’s words about the seventh commandment, then, is to admit that in one degree or another, we are all tainted with sexual sins. But as I said above, for those who admit their sins and confess to God relying on Jesus’s perfect righteousness and grace for sinners like us, then we are sure to receive full forgiveness and He will cleans us from all guilt (1 John 1:8).

Below, I have chosen eight of Kevin DeYoung’s twelve suggested Scripture passages that would help us fight lust and temptations to sexual immorality. I believe all of these are excellent and important, but I think some of them will speak more directly to you in your specific situation at the moment. I hope you find these helpful in your growth in holiness.

Yours in Christ,

Timothy Lee

<https://www.upperhunterpc.com>

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### THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM<sup>2</sup>

#### Lord’s Day 41

#### **Q108) What is God’s will for you in the Seventh Commandment?**

A) God condemns all unchastity. We should therefore thoroughly detest it and, married or single, live decent and chaste lives.

#### **Q109) Does God, In this commandment, forbid only such scandalous sins as adultery?**

A) We are temples of the Holy Spirit, body and soul, and God wants both to be kept clean and holy. That is why He forbids everything which incites unchastity, whether it be actions, looks, talk, thoughts, or desires.

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin DeYoung, *The Good News We Almost Forgot*, p193.

<sup>2</sup> The text of the Catechism is usually from <https://threeforms.org/heidelberg-catechism/>, but time to time, for the sake of clarity, I have also adopted the translation used in *The Good News We Almost Forgot* by Kevin DeYoung.

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### LAMENTATIONS 3:25–27<sup>3</sup>

*The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.*

This verse is for singles (including women). Granted, this passage isn't talking about waiting for a spouse. It's about waiting on the Lord. But that's the point. The Lord is good to those who wait for Him. He knows what you need. The preceding verses tell us, "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore I will hope in him." Don't think, *How can I live without sex for another year or decade or two decades?* Think about today. The Lord has given you grace for this day, and He will give you grace for the next sexless, spouseless day.

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### PROVERBS 5:18–19

*Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.*

This may seem a strange text for fighting sexual temptation, but married couples need to know they have delight at their lawful disposal. We need to know that sex is good, intimacy is good, bodies together in marriage are good. Good, glorious sex is spiritual warfare for the married couple.

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### JAMES 1:14–15

*But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.*

This passage helps us understand how temptation works and reminds us that feeling tempted is not the same as sinning. Temptation is an enticement or allurements. That's not sin. When the desire is nurtured, it conceives and gives birth to sin (sin in the flesh or sin in the mind). Sin then grows and matures and leads to death. It is not lust to be attracted to someone or notice he or she is good looking. It is not lust to have a strong desire for sex. It is not lust to be excited about sex in marriage. It is not lust to experience sexual temptation. It's sin to take another look and mull over the thought for awhile. Just ask King David.

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### 1 CORINTHIANS 6:15–20

*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ... Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

We need a theology of the body: the body is good, but it's not yours. Jesus didn't just die to ransom our souls. He also died for your body. It belongs to God.

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### 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

Cultural liberalism says, "Just be yourself." Self-help doctrine says, "You can find a better you if you just dig deep enough." Moralism says, "Be a better person." The Bible says, "You are a new person by God's grace, now live like it." "Be who you are" is the gospel motivation for holiness.

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### JAMES 4:6

*But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'*

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<sup>3</sup> As mentioned, these passages and comments are from Kevin DeYoung's twelve suggestions in his book, *The Good News We Almost Forgot*, p194–197.

God always gives more grace. So keep coming to Him with your sin and all your commandment violations. Confess like David in Psalm 51 that you have sinned against God. Confess that God is the most offended party as a result of your sin.

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**MATTHEW 5:8**

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

This has been the most helpful verse for me in fighting lust and the temptation to sexual immorality. We need to fight desire with desire. Satan tempts us by holding out something that will be pleasurable to us. We aren't tempted to gorge ourselves on liverwurst, because for most it doesn't hold out the promise of great pleasure. But sex does. Pornography does. A second look does. The Bible gives us many weapons to fight temptation. We need to fight the fleeting pleasure of sexual sin with the far greater, more abiding pleasure of knowing God. The fight for sexual purity is the fight of faith. It may sound like nothing but hard work and gritting your teeth, the very opposite of faith. But faith is at the heart of the struggle. Do we believe that a glimpse of God is better than a glimpse of skin? Do we believe that God's steadfast love is better than life (Ps. 63:3)? We'd probably sin less if we spent less time thinking about our sins, sexual or otherwise, and more time meditating on the love and holiness of God.

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**EPHESIANS 1:18–21**

*That you may know ... the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.*

The great power that created the world, and saved us, and raised Jesus from the dead—that same power is now at work in you. We must believe that God is stronger than sexual temptation, sin, and addiction. If you believe that God brought a dead man back to life, you should believe that you can change. Not overnight, usually, but from one degree of glory to the next.