

# Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery

**Love Letter #7** says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."<sup>1</sup> Adultery comes from the Hebrew word, ne'ifa, and the standard interpretation is "intercourse between a married woman and a man not her husband."<sup>2</sup> Yet, this word, ne'ifa, by definition, extends to both men and women. Hence, any sexual relationship outside of God's Edenic marital covenant between a man and a woman is adultery, and this love letter applies with equal force to both men and women alike.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, however, "current thinking and practice make light of lasting commitments in which both spouses are sexually faithful to each other until death. But Scripture regards any sexual relationship outside of marriage as sin."<sup>4</sup>

Despite this biblical admonition, the proliferation of pre-marital and extramarital sexual relations has skyrocketed as expressed in the countless storylines and themes of popular television sitcoms and movies viewed on conventional television, the internet, and in theaters. Moreover, the global teen pregnancy rates, and the steady rise of unwed mothers, sexually transmitted diseases, and divorce attests to the increase in adulterous relationships.

Recreational sex is the norm today. Three in 10 teen American girls will get pregnant at least once before the age of 20, which constitutes nearly 750,000 teen pregnancies per year.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, 40% of all births in the United States are to unwed mothers, with 72% of all births to Black women occurring outside of marriage.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, 20 million new sexually transmitted disease cases are reported globally each year,<sup>7</sup> and 50% of all marriages in the United States end in divorce.<sup>8</sup>

Our Creator, knowing these devastating effects of adultery, shared this love letter for our own good. He knew that a standard to protect the marital bond was necessary, given His knowledge that adulterous relationships would have negatively enduring effects on His children.

"Such liaisons defraud the legitimate sexual partner, and may harm him or her physically, emotionally, financially, legally, and socially. They hurt the extended family, and if children are involved, they particularly injure them. The cloud of lies and dishonesty that hovers over such affairs so destroys trust that it may never be restored."<sup>9</sup>

God has good news, however; He still restores! For those who have fallen prey to adultery and have disregarded Love Letter #7, there remains hope! God's word conveys this hope in the words of 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."<sup>10</sup> After God forgives, His restoration process goes into effect!

This restoration process is illustrated through the life cycle of a water bottle. When we look at an unused water bottle, the bottle is clean, pure, and spotless. The water inside the bottle looks fresh and wholesome. When we get ready to drink, we're happy because we know the water is going to pour into us and help us restore what we lost. Yet, before we drink from the water bottle, there's a small sign on the bottle that says, "recycled product," which implies that before we saw the clean, pure, and spotless water bottle, it was dirty. It had been used before. It had been thrown into the garbage. It was in the trash. But then one day, someone picked the water bottle up,

dusted it off, and took it to a recycling plant. The water bottle went through the recycling process, and was then filled up again with fresh, clean water to be poured into someone else's life.

For the individual who has been a participant in adultery and dishonored Love Letter #7, God has a recycling process. You may have been used, abused, and thrown in the trash, but Jesus loves you! He can pick you up again! He can dust you off again! He can fill you up again so that you will be able to pour into someone else's life again! Remember, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."11

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1. \*All scriptural texts are taken from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.
2. Exodus 20:14.
3.  <http://judaism.stackexchange.com/questions/11021/what-does-adultery-mean-in-the-7th-commandment>
4.  Hebrews 13:4; Revelation 21:8.
5.  Seventh-day Adventists Believe. . . A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Ministerial Association, Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1988, 300-301. Leviticus 20:10-12; Proverbs 6:24-32; 7:6-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 13, 18; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:3.
6.  <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/unmarried-childbearing.htm>
7.  <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/unmarried-childbearing.htm>
8.  <http://www.cnn.com/2016/10/20/health/std-statistics-record-high/index.html>
9.  [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divorce\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divorce_in_the_United_States)
10.  Seventh-day Adventists Believe. . . A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines, 301. First John 1:9.
11.  Second Corinthians 5:17.