

A scenic view of a mountain valley with a river winding through it, framed by a white border. The foreground shows rugged, reddish-brown rock formations. The middle ground features a wide valley with a river and a winding road. The background consists of distant, hazy mountain ranges under a clear sky.

Seven

The Seventh Commandment

Family Study Guides • The Ten Commandments Series

Seven

The Seventh Commandment

“You shall not commit adultery.”

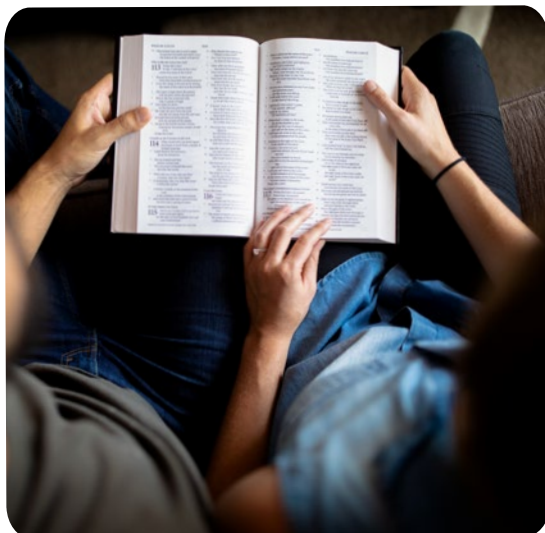
The Seventh Commandment is somewhat sensitive to discuss for a variety of reasons. Since Deuteronomy 6:1-6 places the responsibility for teaching these commandments upon parents, it is you who must decide what and how much to discuss with your children. It is not wise to discuss too much too soon with younger children, nor is it wise to avoid the tough questions with older children. You do not need to cover every aspect, discussion or scripture presented, but select the aspects most relevant or helpful to your family. We hope this study guide will provide you with enough suggested material to help you approach the subject in the most relevant manner with your family.



Additionally, this study guide has suggested lessons and activities that can be used in a classroom setting. These are found at the end of the guide.

Objectives:

- Help your family learn about the seventh commandment and identify its New Testament application. Keeping God's laws involve attitudes, thoughts and feelings.
- Help the family understand that there are consequences for breaking God's laws, but that God is merciful and forgiving.
- Describe and discuss a negative and a positive biblical example of the Seventh Commandment.



Memory Verse

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,’ then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more” (Hebrews 10:16-17).

1. The Basic Principle of Adultery

Parents, an expanded version of this section is in the “Instructors” section below.

While “adultery” is a commandment for a husband and wife to be faithful to one another, the principle of this law is instructive to all of us in many ways.

a. Have you ever had a “BFF” (Best Friends Forever)? When we have a close friend, how do we treat them?

- We show them respect. We honor them by talking with them and sharing feelings. We say nice things and treat them well. We help them when they are feeling down or have other needs. We put their needs or wants before our own. We defend them and protect them from harm.
- When people declare themselves as BFFs, they make certain promises that each expects the other to keep.



b. God created an ultimate human “BFF” relationship—called marriage.

- “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24, King James Version).



- Cleave is an old-fashioned word, that means to adhere firmly, closely, loyally and unwaveringly. To marry is to promise to adhere (stick like glue!) to your spouse. All the things we apply to best friends apply even more to a marriage. Adultery breaks the promise of being a married best friend forever.
- Jesus said, “But in the beginning God made a man and a woman. That’s why a man leaves his father and mother and gets married. He becomes like one person with his wife. Then they are no longer two people, but one. And no one should separate a couple that God has joined together” (Mark 10:6-9, Contemporary English Version).

- If you have ever had a good friend betray you in some way, you know how badly it hurts. This article expounds on the concept of betrayal (which is related to adultery). <https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/betrayal-is-painful>.

c. Because God wants married couples to be happy, He made the rule that they should treat each other well, be faithful to one another and not commit adultery.

- To have truly blessed relationships we should be trustworthy friends, be loyal to our family members and be faithful to God.
- Adultery poisons the marriage relationship. When we get married we must be faithful to our mate. Likewise, we must not look for happiness outside of our relationship with God.
- Learning to turn away from wrong behavior while young helps us gain the self-discipline which will protect us from committing adultery. This will keep our lives pure and in obedience to God.

d. Another application of the principle of not committing adultery is our relationship in the Church to Jesus Christ. Read Ephesians 5:21-33.

e. God uses the lives of people in the Bible to teach lessons about how we should live our lives. Some of these lessons are about positive things people did or accomplished. Other times God gives biblical lessons that we can learn from the sins and mistakes people made.

- Have you ever learned a lesson from someone else’s mistake?
- As a family discuss an example and what each person might have learned.



2. Joseph's Story

Joseph is a **good example** of a young person who obeyed the seventh commandment even though he was not yet married. (Read Genesis 39 and discuss Joseph's life while he was in Potiphar's household.)

Pharaoh was the ruler (king) of Egypt. Joseph was sold to an important person, Potiphar. Joseph was a good worker and became well liked in Potiphar's house. He did so well that Potiphar made him the head of his household. Because Joseph worked hard despite the fact that he was a slave, God blessed him.



Joseph was very handsome and Potiphar's wife tried to get him to break the seventh commandment. His response to her is what all of us should think when someone wants us to do something wrong: "How could I do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God" (Genesis 39:9, New Living Translation). Joseph had God's laws in his heart and wanted to please Him. (See Hebrews 10:16)

Joseph not only did not want to do the wrong thing—he did not want to think the wrong thing. "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But now I tell you: anyone who looks at a woman and wants to possess her is guilty of committing adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:27, Good News Translation).

When she kept after him to do wrong, Joseph did the right thing again. "She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house" (Genesis 39:12, New International Version). He knew what he must do to avoid doing the wrong thing: "Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body" (1 Corinthians 6:18, New Living Translation).

Joseph was then unfairly thrown in prison even though he was a good worker and he obeyed God. Sometimes doing the right thing is hard to do, but we need to know that God will bless us in the end. We also need to understand that doing the wrong thing ends up bringing bad and long-lasting consequences. What blessings did Joseph ultimately receive by being faithful to God and His ways?

3. David and Bathsheba's Story

Another person to study is David, a great king, who was a man after God's own heart. King David did many things that pleased God and he was a man whom God loved very much.

- Read and discuss the section of David's life discussed in 2 Samuel 11.
- What are some of the things that you know about the life of King David? (Discuss several great stories such as: fighting Goliath; killing the lion and bear to protect the sheep; writing the Psalms; being a great warrior; being chosen by God to be King; etc.)

God was very pleased with David and eventually chose David to be king of Israel. David was devoted to God, but despite this, he made some very bad decisions and choices that were contrary to God's laws that he regretted the rest of his life. For these mistakes, he had to suffer some difficult penalties. These wrong choices, the resulting consequences and God's ultimate mercy and forgiveness related to those events are recorded in the Bible for our instruction. How David dealt with his sins is an important aspect of this lesson.

Two of the most critical mistakes of David's life occurred while Israel was at war. From his palace balcony one night, he observed a very beautiful woman bathing. He had her brought to his palace and committed adultery with her. She was married to a man named Uriah, who was a soldier in Israel's army. As a result of this sinful relationship between David and Bathsheba, Uriah's wife became pregnant. David hoped to make Bathsheba his own wife in order to cover his mistake. Therefore, David as commander in chief, had Uriah sent to the front line of the battle and then had military support for him withdrawn. This resulted in Uriah's death. So not only did David steal Uriah's wife, but also had him killed.

- Read 2 Samuel 11:4-5. Which of God's commandments did David and Bathsheba break?
- Read 2 Samuel 11:14-17. Which commandment did David break in this instance?
- How did God feel about what David had done? Read 2 Samuel 11:27 and 2 Samuel 12:1-7.
- Discuss some ways the story might have turned out differently if David and/or Bathsheba had done what Joseph had done.

God sent a prophet by the name of Nathan to David to expose his sins and confront him about them. Nathan told David a story about a rich man stealing a poor man's sheep. David condemns the rich man. Nathan told David that that is what he had done with Uriah. God punished David because he had committed the sins of murder, stealing and adultery.

- What were some of the punishments that David received as the result of his sins?

It is important to know that sin always has penalties attached.

- Discuss with your older children what penalties or consequences can come from sexual sins.
- In light of current scandals related to adultery, this article can help drive the point home about the penalty of sin: <https://www.ucg.org/vertical-thought/dont-take-a-tiger-by-the-tail>

What was King David's response when he finally realized how badly he has been sinning?



Source: David Padfield/FreeBibleImages.org

- "I have sinned against the LORD," David said. Nathan replied, "The LORD forgives you; you will not die" (2 Samuel 12:13, GNT).
- The chapter of Psalm 51, shows David's prayer of repentance and how he changed his whole attitude. As a result of David truly putting God's laws within his heart, God forgave him.
- What similarity can you find between David's story and the woman in John 8:1-11?
- What are some of the lessons we can learn from these experiences in David's life?

Family Discussions and Activities

The Spirit of the Law

What is the Seventh Commandment? What is the spirit of this law? Read Hebrews 10:16.

Scripture Application

While Matthew 5:29 is not to be taken literally—how can we apply the principle involved to avoid sin?

Qualities God Desires

As a family, make a list of the things that God desires from us. The list should include our actions, attitudes and inward qualities. Psalm 51 contains some of these. How can having a bad attitude affect our relationship with God?

Poster

As a family make a list of the changes that will occur as a result of everyone keeping God's Seventh Commandment. Post the list of ideas on poster board or somewhere so everyone can see them.

Challenge Activity (Older Students)

Discuss how adultery—in principle—breaks every other commandment. “Whoever breaks one commandment is guilty of breaking them all” (James 2:10, GNT). (Example: A person committing adultery is stealing someone else's spouse.)

- Adultery is stealing. It steals the love from another or steals someone's spouse away. It is taking love that does not belong to you.
- Adultery is a living lie. It is done without the knowledge of the spouse. Adultery destroys trust and jeopardizes the family. It breaks the promise “I will always be faithful to you.”
- Adultery is coveting someone who does not belong to you.
- Adultery is the supreme example of selfishness. “I need this for me. My spouse does not meet my needs.”



Ten Commandments Journal

If you are keeping a journal, as a family write your thoughts about the Seventh Commandment.



Additional Resources for Your Family Studies

UCG Study Aid “The Ten Commandments”

<https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/the-ten-commandments>

Video—Sex Has a Price Tag

Stats on teens who don’t have sex before marriage. This is an excellent presentation that has been used by the United Church of God as a great resource to help teens see the importance of sexual purity.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IhORvXRDENo>

For Older Children

These three articles are an excellent resource for discussions on sex.

- <https://www.ucg.org/members/united-news/good-sex-bad-sex>
- <https://www.ucg.org/united-news/heart-to-heart-talk-with-men-and-teen-boys>
- <https://www.ucg.org/united-news/heart-to-heart-talk-with-women-and-teen-girls>

Challenging Conversations Related to the Seventh Commandment

LGBTQIA+

LGBTQIA+ is the latest acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or sometimes questioning), intersex, asexual and others. The “plus” represents other sexual identities, including pansexual and Two-Spirit.

- What does God have to say about these kinds of behaviors?
- How should we treat people who are practicing homosexuals?
- What does God say about homosexuals who have repented of their past actions?
- Is someone committing adultery less sinful than someone involved in LGBTQ+ relationships?

Sexting

- What is it?
- Have you or have your friends done sexting activities?
- How can this lead to bullying?
- Read and discuss the Redbook Magazine article pages 111-114: <http://www.redbookmag.com/life/mom-kids/advice/a12892/teenage-sexting/>

Rape

- What is the definition? What should you do if rape happens to you or your friend?
- Review the OT examples: Dinah in Genesis 34; Tamar, Amnon and Absalom in 2 Samuel 13.

Optional Classroom Activities

Your Body Belongs to God

Before the lesson, ask a student to hold a pencil or similar item you give them until you ask for it. Once the lesson begins, ask the student for the pencil. Then, break it into several pieces and throw it on the floor. Ask the students, “Why was that a bad idea?” Possible responses will be “because that was a perfectly good pencil and now you can’t use it” or “the pencil wasn’t yours.”



Talk about how we are God’s children, and our body is not our own (1 Corinthians 6:20). The way we act and the way we treat others is the way we are treating God’s children. We do not have a right to do whatever we want with what belongs to God. God expects us to be honorable and treat others with honor (1 Timothy 5:2).

The List

List the ways you hope to be treated in a loyal, committed relationship (family, friends, husband or wife). What kind of person do you want to have a close relationship with? Discuss how these attributes relate to the Seventh Commandment and ways we can aspire to treat others with love (Matthew 7:12, 1 Corinthians 13).

Marriage Panel Interviews

Invite members of the congregation who are known to have strong, committed marriages to volunteer for a panel interview either among the youth group or in the congregation. The goal will be to have them answer questions from the youth about courtship and marriage in pursuit of honoring the Seventh Commandment. Be sure to have the youth submit their questions in advance. The questions can be from youth of all ages. Then, the panel can prepare their answers before the discussion. You’ll also probably want to have a moderator who can keep time and keep the questions and responses moving. At the end, encourage some of the youth to share a “take-away,” or notable lesson, from the interview.

Pure Thoughts and Actions

Bring two clear disposable bottles of water (half full) to the class. Have students brainstorm the types of thoughts or actions that God would not be pleased with. Then, pass around a bottle of water. For each impure thought or action, place a drop of blue food coloring into the water. At the end, compare the tainted water with the untainted water. Which would be better to drink?

God wants us to think on pure things. Talk about things that are good for us and for others that we

can think about or do. (Read from Proverbs; try to do an act of kindness for someone at least once a day; speak positive words using compliments and saying thank you). (Proverbs 23:7, 2 Timothy 2:22, 1 Corinthians 4:8).

(If this exercise is done, complete the following as well. Sometimes people who have been “tainted” feel that it is too late to make positive changes in their lives.) Add bleach to the tainted water and it will become clear. God’s forgiveness and Christ’s sacrifice cleanses us from our sin. If we do make wrong choices, we must seek forgiveness from God. We still may have to

live with the effects of our choices, but we can have a relationship with God when He forgives us (like the Prodigal Son in our lesson on the Fifth Commandment).



Case Studies for Older Students

Give students the opportunity to study examples from the Bible that demonstrate loyalty or disloyalty in relationships. Some possible questions to focus the study: What can we learn from this example to help us keep the Seventh Commandment? What was their relationship like with God throughout the example as far as you can tell? What choice was made that was loyal or disloyal? What impacted the choices of the people in the example?

Discussions for Older Students

Discuss the following situations in light of the principle in Proverbs 27:6.

- Your friend shares or posts a video that you know doesn’t meet God’s standards according to the Seventh Commandment. What are some ways to approach the situation that both keep you from violating the Seventh Commandment and may help your friend stay accountable for their thoughts or actions?
- You have a friend who at times comes to church services in immodest clothing. How can you be a positive influence without being offensive to your friend in this sensitive issue?
- Your friend seems to be gaining some attention from someone that you know has a reputation for taking their relationships “a little too far” according to the Seventh Commandment. Your friend also seems to be spending more time with this person. How can you be helpful to your friend in this situation?
- A classroom discussion comes up that center around LGBT rights. How can you respectfully navigate your way through the discussion and uphold godly values?

Seventh Commandment Summary Lesson

Instructors, the following is an expansion of the principles found at the beginning of this Family Study Guide. The lesson should be adjusted to be sure the content is age-appropriate. Additionally, be sensitive about the way material is presented in youth instruction classes, and be mindful of parents' role on this topic versus the instructor role.

Understanding This Commandment

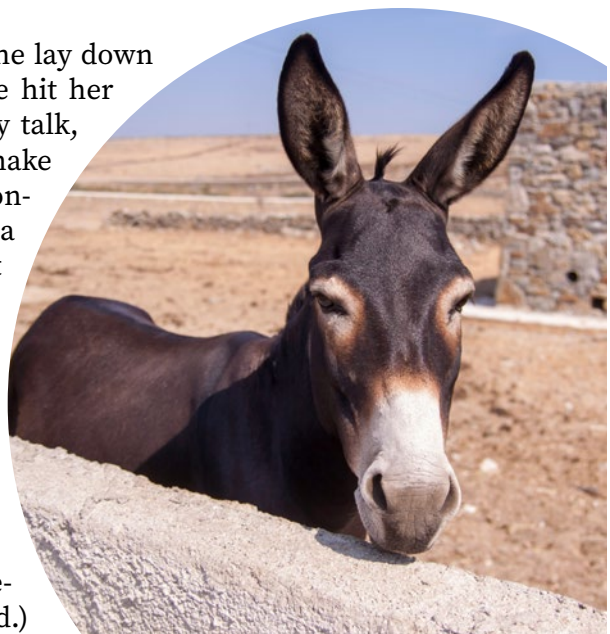
It is a good thing to have a lot of friends and to be kind to everyone. While we might have a lot of friends—most of us have a special friend. Sometimes we say they are BFFs (Best Friends Forever). When you have a close friend, how do you treat them? We show them respect. We honor them by talking with them and sharing feelings. We say nice things and treat them well. We help them when they are feeling down or have other needs. We put their needs or wants before our own. We defend them and protect them from harm. When we declare ourselves as BFFs—we make certain promises that each expects the other to keep.

- Do you have a special friend? How does it make you feel to have someone you feel very close to? What things do you do to make the friendship special? (Call them on phone, write notes, study together, buy or make them a gift, want to play together, etc.)
- Do any of you have a pet that is “your” very own? Maybe a cat that only comes to you, and not the rest of the family? How does it make you feel to be special to your pet? How does it make you feel if your pet goes to somebody else instead of to you? You feel a bit jealous right? He’s YOUR pet!

There is a kind of funny story in the Bible where a man named Balaam had a long-time animal friend—and they got mad at each other because they felt the other one was not treating them well. Read the story in Numbers 22. Think about how each felt betrayed by the other one and how it made them feel.

“When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam. This made him so angry that he hit her with his stick. Then the LORD made the donkey talk, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to make you hit me three times?” Balaam answered the donkey, “You have made me look foolish! I wish I had a sword in my hand! I would kill you right now!” But the donkey said to Balaam, “I am your very own donkey, which you have ridden for years. Have I ever done this to you before?” “No,” Balaam said” (Numbers 22:27, New Century Version).

Have you ever had a good friend that quit hanging out with you? They said or did something that hurt you—and maybe started being friends with somebody else. How did it make you feel? (Betrayed. Not loved. Disappointed. Hurt. Abandoned.)



King David in the Bible wrote about an experience he had. “It was not an enemy insulting me. I could stand that. It was not someone who hated me. I could hide from him. But it is you, a person like me, my companion and good friend. We had a good friendship and walked together to God’s Temple” (We were in the church together.) (Psalms 55:12-14, NCV). “This friend of mine betrayed me—I who was at peace with him. He broke his promises” (Psalms 55:20, The Living Bible).

If these things have happened we might say that our pet—or our friend—is “unfaithful” to us. That is kind of what the Seventh Commandment about adultery is about.

Marriage—a Special “Best Friend”

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24, KJV). Cleave is an old-fashioned word, that means to adhere firmly, closely, loyally, and unwaveringly. To marry is to promise to adhere (stick like glue!) to your spouse. All the things we apply to best friends apply even more in a marriage. Adultery breaks the promise of being a married “best friend forever.”

“But in the beginning God made a man and a woman. That’s why a man leaves his father and mother and gets married. He becomes like one person with his wife. Then they are no longer two people, but one. And no one should separate a couple that God has joined together” (Mark 10:6-9, CEV).

When a man and woman commit themselves to marriage—they make promises to each other. In a wedding in the church this is what they say:

“Do you then [man’s name] faithfully promise and covenant with God, in the presence of these witnesses, to take [her name] to be your lawful wedded wife—in sickness and in health, in good times and in difficult times, for as long as you both shall live—to love her, cherish her, honor her and provide for her?”

“And do you [her name] faithfully promise and covenant with God, in the presence of these witnesses, to take [his name] to be your lawful wedded husband—in sickness and in health, in good times and in difficult times, for as long as you both shall live—to love him, cherish him, honor him, and, as God has ordained, submit yourself to him?”

Adultery involves doing things where the husband and/or wife breaks these promises.

If you have ever had a BFF betray you in some way, you know how badly it hurts. Because God wants married couples to be happy, He made the rule that they should treat each other well, be faithful to one another—and not commit adultery.

Another application of the principle of not committing adultery goes even further. God wants to be “Best Friends Forever” with all humans that He created!

- Jesus said: “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (John 15:13-14).



- “The LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (Exodus 33:11).
- “Abraham trusted God, and the Lord declared him good in God’s sight, and he was even called ‘the friend of God’” (James 2:23, TLB).

A Spiritual Marriage

The Bible shows that our spiritual friendship with him is as important as the human relationship is between a husband and wife.

“Honor Christ and put others first. A wife should put her husband first, as she does the Lord. A husband is the head of his wife, as Christ is the head and the Savior of the church, which is his own body. Wives should always put their husbands first, as the church puts Christ first. A husband should love his wife as much as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it” (Ephesians 5:21-25, CEV).

“As the Scriptures say, ‘A man leaves his father and mother to get married, and he becomes like one person with his wife.’ This is a great mystery, but I understand it to mean Christ and his church. So each husband should love his wife as much as he loves himself, and each wife should respect her husband” (Ephesians 5:31-33, CEV).

We are in the church because we love God and want to do what He says. He loves us and wants to bless us with good things. When a person is baptized, they make a promise to God to be loyal and faithful to God and His word. We don’t do what God wants just because we have to. We love him so much that we really, really want to please him. Whenever a person goes back on their word to obey God, they have broken a promise to Him. That is like committing adultery, giving our heart to someone else. When we make mistakes and sin, God wants us to do the right thing, and He forgives us when we do repent.



This is what the memory scripture is about:

“‘This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days,’ says the LORD: ‘I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,’ then He adds, ‘Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more’” (Hebrews 10:16-17).

To have truly blessed relationships we should be trustworthy friends, be loyal to our family members and be faithful to God. Adultery poisons the marriage relationship. When we get married we must be faithful to our mate. Likewise, we must not look for happiness outside of our relationship with God. Learning to turn away from wrong behavior while young helps us gain the self-discipline which will protect us from committing adultery. This will keep our lives pure and in obedience to God.

Coloring and Fill in the Blank Activity



Finish the Verse

Complete the memory verse by filling in the missing words.

“This is the _____ that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My _____ into their hearts, and in their minds I will _____ them,’ then He adds, ‘Their sins and their _____ deeds I will remember no more’” (Hebrews 10:16-17).