

# THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

(According to the original book by H.H. Pope Shenouda, III)

## *The Seventh Commandment*

**"You Shall Not Commit Adultery" (Exodus 20:14), (Deuteronomy 5:18)**

### 1. The Hideousness of This Sin

The apostle says: *"Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body; but he that commits sexual immorality sins against his own body" (1 Corinthians 6:18).*

What is the seriousness of man's sinning against his body?

According to the apostle, this seriousness focuses upon two reasons:

1. *"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 harlot?" (1 Corinthians 6:15).*
2. *"Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit...and you are not your own?... Therefore, glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).*

*"You are the temple of the living God" (2 Corinthians 6:16). "Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (1 Corinthians 3:16,17).*

Therefore, whoever commits adultery, sins against the members of Christ.

And he defiles the temple of God, the temple of the Holy Spirit!

How horrible it is! And what else is there about the seriousness of this commandment? So hideous is this sin that it is called "uncleanness". Peter, the apostle, says that God *"reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment. And especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness" (2 Peter 2:9,10).*

Thus he used the expression: "The lust of uncleanness" instead of saying: "The lust of adultery".

When Shechem committed adultery with Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, the Bible says: *"And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter" (Genesis 34:5).* As for Jacob's sons, they grew extremely angry and worked out a plot through which they killed Shechem and the men of his city, *"because he had defiled Dinah their sister" (Genesis 34:13,27).*

Ezekiel, the prophet, says about the man who commits adultery that he *"defiled his neighbor's wife" (Ezekiel 18:11).*

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Jude, the apostle, says that wet dreamers, *"defile the flesh"* (Jude 8) and John, the apostle, explains in the Book of Revelation, *"the judgment of the great harlot (is) for abominations and the filthiness of her fornication"* (Revelation 17:1,4). These great saints explained to us the magnanimity of the *"hundred forty and four thousand, who sang the new hymn which no one else could sing"*. He said: *"These are the ones who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes"* (Revelation 14:4).

God communicated this same meaning to the angel of the church in Sardis, saying: *"You have a few names even in Sardis... who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me...for they are worthy"* (Revelation 3:4).

All the above shows us that the sin of adultery has been called uncleanness, that adulterers defile their bodies, defile their clothes, defile women, and are themselves defiled with them, and that they follow the flesh in their lust for uncleanness.

And what else? God says through the prophet Jeremiah that with that affair *"Would not that land be greatly polluted"*, and says to the sinning woman, *"You have polluted the land with your harlotries"* (Jeremiah 3:1,2). Thus, adultery does not defile the adulterers only, but it also defiles the land. Isn't that terrible!

Calling this sin uncleanness and the like occurs also in the epistles of Saint Paul, the apostle, where he says: *"the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness"* (Galatians 5:19). He said in his epistle to the Colossians: *"Put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion"* (Colossians 3:5). In his epistle to the Ephesians, he said: *"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints...for because of these the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience"* (Ephesians 5:3-6).

All these descriptions have been applied to the sin of adultery. Thus it has been described as uncleanness, whoredom, fornication, seducement, lust.

And what else? In view of its hideousness, idolatry was called adultery. When the children of Israel worshipped idols in the period of Judges, the Bible said about them: *"And yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them"* (Judges 2:17).

This expression became a familiar one in the Holy Bible. Thus when the kingdom of Israel, followed by the Kingdom of Judah, indulged into idol-worshipping, God said through the prophet Jeremiah: *"Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain, and under every green tree, and there played the harlot, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. So it came to pass through her casual harlotry that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and trees"* (Jeremiah 3:6-9).

In keeping with the same meaning, God said through the prophet Hosea: *"there is the harlotry of Ephraim, Israel is defiled"* (Hosea 6:10).

We would not have enough time if we tried to quote all the holy texts where the term "adultery" is applied to idol worshipping. However, we should go further to say that sin in general was called "adultery" since no other term could describe how hideous it is.

What else is there about the hideousness of this sin? Because of it, God's harshest punishments were inflicted

upon the world.

1. What was the harshest punishment that God inflicted upon the world in the Old Testament? Undoubtedly, it was the flood, since the Lord said: *"I will destroy man whom I have created... The end of all flesh is come before Me... My Spirit shall not strive with man forever"* (Genesis 6:7,13,3). This was the mighty punishment of annihilation, the like of which had never happened before. And what was the cause of it? It was adultery. The Bible says: *"Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were beautiful"* (Genesis 6:1,2).
2. Balaam, who had been hired by Balac to curse Israel, knew what Saint Paul, the apostle, said later on that: *"Because of these things God's wrath comes upon the sinners"*. Therefore, he decided that the best way to destroy them was for them: *"to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality"* (Revelation 2:14). And this actually happened, and Balaam's deviation took place, for the Bible says: *"Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the woman of Moab"* (Numbers 25:1). Thus God's wrath befell the people, and He smote them with pestilence from which they were not rescued except through Phinehas who, motivated by sacred zeal, killed the Israeli man and the woman he was fornicating with: *"So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel. And those who died in the plague were twenty four thousand"* (Numbers 25:8-9). The Lord praised Phinehas because he stayed off His anger against the people. Otherwise He would have annihilated them.
3. Because of adultery also, God burnt down Sodom and Gomorrah: *"Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah from the Lord out of heaven: and He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew on the ground"* (Genesis 19:24,25). Saint Jude, the apostle, recalled that terrible incident and said: *"As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire"* (Jude 7). We know that before these two cities were burnt down, and also because of adultery, the two angels smote many of the inhabitants of Sodom with blindness (Genesis 19:11), and later, these blind adulterers were also burnt.
4. Because of adultery also, all the tribe of Benjamin was about to be annihilated, (Judges 20), and because of it God destroyed many when they committed adultery with the daughters of Moab. In this regard, the apostle said: *"Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty three thousand fell"* (1 Corinthians 10:8).
5. Because of adultery, the apostle Paul passed a serious judgment on the Corinthian sinner, a judgment which made him about to be swallowed up in utter grief. Thus he said, *"To deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"* (1 Corinthians 5:5).
6. In addition to these examples of severe earthly punishments, there is also a heavenly penalty, which is eternal perdition. In this regard, St. Paul says: *"Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, will inherit the kingdom of God"* (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). We should notice here that Saint Paul placed fornicators before idolaters, a fact that indicates the seriousness and hideousness of this sin.

And what else is there about the seriousness of this sin? By reason of this sin by itself the holy bond of matrimony is dissolved. This great sacrament, which has been likened to the reunion between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:22-32), which the Lord God referred to as: *"Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate"* (Matthew 19:6), and which no reason has the power to dissolve, this holy bond may be dissolved by virtue of this one reason, namely, adultery. The lord knows that man can endure anything that a woman does, and can forgive any offense she commits, except adultery, which is unbearable and following which man cannot live with the woman. Adultery leads to a dissolution of the "one body" bond, and following

it, the couple become "two", as they were before their marriage, and no longer one.

***Other indications to the hideousness of this sin.***

1. One of the strong proofs to the hideousness of this sin is what Saint Paul orders us not to do: *"not to keep company with sexually immoral people...not even to eat with such a person...put away from yourselves that evil person"* (1 Corinthians 5:9,11,13). Therefore, an adulterer is isolated by the Christian community, which shuns him as an unclean and wicked person who carries the germs of an epidemic. How severe that is! When the Corinthian sinner was exposed to this, he was about to be *"swallowed up with too much sorrow"* (2 Corinthians 2:7).
2. The sin of adultery is a complex one: It is not confined only to man's sin against another whom he covets, defiles, trips, or tempts, but it also includes man's sinning against his own self since he loses his own chastity and purity, defiles himself, and destroys his health. Moreover, he sins against God, because he turns Christ's members into adulterers, and defiles the temple of the Holy Spirit which is his own body. Thus when the prophet David committed adultery with the wife of Oria the Hittite, he turned to God, screaming out: *"Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight"* (Psalms 51:4). Adultery may develop and produce other serious consequences: such as loss of virginity, pregnancy, abortion, divorce, or a change of religion to avoid the consequences of sinning or to pursue a lust that has taken hold of one! Most regretfully, most of those who nowadays abandon their religion, do so for this reason: They fall into the sin of adultery and are unable to avoid the consequences! This sets up for us an example of the extent sin may lead us to.
3. The sin of adultery encompasses the whole person, for every part of him sins when he commits it: his thoughts, his senses, his heart, his body, and his soul. Sin pervades his whole being and polarizes it. Sins of lust and passion, in particular, are practiced by the person as a whole, conversely, other sins are contributed to by one part only of a person. Thus, for instance, suspicion may be a sin restricted to man's thoughts, and some sins concerning spoken words may be restricted to man's tongue.
4. Adultery is so hideous that people sometimes find it expressive enough to just call it "the sin". Thus, in her confession to a priest, a girl may stop at saying: "I have sinned". The priest then understands that it is that sin in particular.
5. Adultery is such a hideous sin that it is regarded as enmity to God and love of the world. The apostle, Saint James, says in this connection: *"Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God"* (James 4:4).
6. This commandment is of such importance that, when the apostles studied the question of the Gentiles who converted into the Faith, and wanted to facilitate matters for them without burdening them with too many commandments, they confined their prohibitions to the few most hideous things committed by the Gentiles. One of these was adultery. Thus, James, the apostle, said: *"Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God: But that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood"* (Acts 15:19-20).
7. By reason of the hideousness of the sin of adultery, some people think that it was Adam's and Eve's sin which incurred woe upon the whole world. However, I am totally in disagreement with this view for many reasons.
8. This sin is so serious that it has brought about the downfall of many mighty people, including prophets such as David. Thus, Solomon the Wise, based upon experience, referred to it, saying: *"For she has cast down many wounded, and many strong (men) have been slain by her"* (Proverbs 7:26). The devil of adultery is a violent one, which requires great caution and a strong support from the Holy Spirit.

Man's sin becomes more hideous if he forces a woman to commit adultery with him and rapes her, for then he

behaves like a monster and not a human being. In this case he bears the blame for his, as well as her sin, especially if she resists with all her strength, cries out for help to no avail, and disapproves of the sin deep in her heart. In this regard the law says: *"only the man who lay with her shall die. But you shall do nothing to the young woman; there is in the young woman no sin deserving of death, for just as when a man rises against his neighbor and kills him, even so is this matter"* (Deuteronomy 22:25-26).

If adultery is committed with someone who is unaware or ignorant of the act, as with an unknowing youngster, then it lies within the scope of enforced adultery.

The sin of adultery becomes more hideous if it is committed incestuously or unnaturally in accordance with the explanation of the apostle Paul in his epistle to the Romans (1:26,27), or if it is committed in ways devised to satiate lust.

## 2. Types Of Adultery

It is not my intention to discuss this topic in detail since it will then require whole books to cover it. I only intend here to say a few meaningful words about the whole subject in summary.

### *Names:*

Adultery is of many types and carries several names that comprise many vocabulary words. Thus it is called adultery when committed by married individuals, fornication, as a general term, when committed by addicts and perverts, and sodomy, or sexual perversion, when committed by homosexuals and sodomites.

### *Types:*

Adultery, which is known as sexual lust, may be committed through thinking, the senses, the heart, the body, or through dreams. It may evolve into attempts aimed at attaining satisfaction in a variety of ways. It may also be committed by the tongue, the ears, or through writing. There is also the adultery of intention, as well as total adultery.

Drawing other people into adultery may take place through seduction, temptation, tripping, deceit, or association. It may also happen by consent and response, or through coercion and rape.

### *Adultery Through The Senses:*

1. Man may fall into adultery through his sight. Thus the Lord God said, *"Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her, has already committed adultery with her in his heart"* (Matthew 5:28). This was also realized by Job, the righteous, in the Old Testament, hence his beautiful statement: *"I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman"* (Job 31:1). Therefore, shyness and a "bashful look" are signs of virtue, but he who feasts his eyes on physical beauty or an exciting sight reveals an indication that his heart is impure. However, this does not mean that every look is sinful. The first look may not be a sin, for man cannot live with his eyes closed. His eyes may unconsciously or involuntarily fall upon a sexual or an exciting scene. Up to this point, he has not committed a mistake. However, if this unintentional look excites him and makes him willingly cast another look, it then becomes a sin, since it is a form of seeking satisfaction. The commission of a sin may not take place in a second look, for perhaps the man is outwardly in control of himself and does not cast a second look. However, the sin

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lies in his inner self, which was affected by the first look of lust, and in his heart.

2. Man may commit adultery through hearing. This takes place when he experiences a sense of enjoyment at listening to sexual matters and getting excited in the process, or keeping them in his subconscious to be excited by them at a later time.
3. Man may commit adultery through the sense of touch, or through the sense of smell when a certain smell excites him and satisfies his sense. That is why perfumes are sometimes used in a way intended for temptation.

### ***Adultery Through Thinking:***

Senses work externally, but when thought is defiled, adultery starts working internally. Thought then turns into lust in the heart. Sinning may start with a lust in the heart that generates ideas. These ideas then excite the senses that look for satisfaction. However, this satisfaction may be confined to thinking where wakeful dreams and a lot of imagining take place.

Thinking about sex may be generated through reading, watching, listening to, or getting mixed up in any type of exciting events.

However, we should differentiate between the war of thoughts and sinning through thinking, for the devil may fight against man using adulterous thoughts. Thus, if the fight is external and persistent, and if man rejects and shuns it, he has not yet sinned, but is merely struggling against it. But sinning through thinking is the acceptance of sinful thoughts, negotiating them enjoying them and inventing new ones to satisfy the heart's lust.

### ***Adultery Through The Heart (Through Lust):***

If the struggle takes place in thinking and not in the heart, then it is only mild. However, it becomes more raging if it mixes up with emotion, and it increases with the increase of whatever control desire has over man. At this point, the case becomes serious and may develop into actual adultery, namely through the body. However, adultery through the heart may be a mere intention in it which circumstances do not help to get fulfilled, or maybe man disposes of it in a spiritual way, thus getting himself rid of it.

### ***Adultery Through the Tongue or The Written Word:***

This form of adultery comprises all forms of exciting sexual talk including jesting, flirting, sexual jokes, love stories, wicked songs, as well as soft and lustful talk. All these fall under the title of sin where man sins against himself and his listeners.

It may happen that such expressions are put down in writing, in which case they also lead to the same sins whether the expression occurs in novels, stories, poems or letters.

### ***Offenses:***

An offense may rise in an early age through the parents' method of raising their children. The head of a family may accompany his children to the movies to please and entertain them, yet the show may include offensive things that will open the children's eyes and make them lose their spiritual naivete. The father may argue that the show has nothing harmful and that it has not produced any bad influence upon them. In saying this he overlooks the difference in age between him and his children, for after all he is mature and controlled by his intellect while his children are still of an age controlled by their senses and instincts. He also overlooks the

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difference between them in social status, for, unlike his children, he's married and does not suffer any form of suppression. Moreover, he overlooks the fact that an offense may not produce any effect at present, but may do so later on when the scenes follow his children into their future.

Another type of father may want his home to be a high class one in accordance with his own concept of high-class. Thus he furnishes his residence with all the means of entertainment, such as a television, or a home movie, before which the wife and the children sit at all times. The father may claim that the members of his family will be in control of what they hear and see. *"Offenses should come: but woe to him through whom they do come"* (Luke 17:1).

The father's responsibility increases if he forces his children into sinfulness when he confronts their religiousness and carefulness with irritating mockery.

Another example of sinfulness is the mother who wants to marry off her daughter. She may force her child into using make-up and certain clothes so as to attract the people's attention. Such an attitude makes her, as well as those looking at her daughter, fall into sinfulness.

A sin may be brought about through friends and bad company: According to the Bible: *"evil company corrupts good habits"* (I Corinthians 15:33). These communications comprise sinful conversations, faulty meetings and excursions, and wrong directives picturing manhood and happiness as lying in corruption.

A sin may be brought about through a permissive society and the temptation of the opposite sex. We are in a generation that is disintegrating as far as clothing, adornment and permissiveness are concerned. If clothing is not in keeping with bashfulness, and if people put on such clothes regardless of religion and conscience, they may be doing so because they are permissive, because they want to keep up with the modern trends, or just out of fear of being criticized.

Many a time, a girl finds enchantment in the admiration of people and the flattery of the vile. Thus she adorns herself, not for those at home but for outsiders. Often, too, does a woman find pleasure in entrapping men. This act fills her with confidence in herself and her influence regardless of her responsibility for this sin before her own conscience. She herself may not fall into lustfulness; however she falls into a form of awareness of her personality, which is of a worldly type.

This girl may argue that she has not fallen into adultery. However, God will hold her accountable for the blood of those who fell because of her, and she will bear the burden of their sins on Judgment Day. In this connection, the Lord Jesus said, *"woe to that man by whom the offense comes...it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea"* (Matthew 18:6). Do you think that the statement: *"We reap blood O Lord"* in Psalm fifty, that we repeat every hour in our prayers, is intended only for the blood of the murdered? No, for it refers also to every person whose sin we caused and whose blood God us to account for on Judgment Day.

What has been said here about a woman applies also to a man if he is the cause of sinfulness.

### ***Adulterous Relationships Protected By The Law:***

There are certain social relationships that Christianity condemns as adulterous no matter how hard their attempts are to shelter them behind worldly laws that religion does not approve of. The best known of these adulterous relationships are:

### *1. Marriage following a wrongful divorce:*

The Lord Jesus says about the law of divorce: *"Whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9).*

*"Whoever divorces his wife, and marries another, commits adultery" (Luke 16:18), (Mark 10:11).*

Therefore whoever divorces his wife for any other reason, no matter what judgments he has obtained, has his divorce considered null and void from the Christian point of view, and is still regarded as a married man. If he then marries another, it will be as if he had taken another wife beside his own. This is what God has meant by His words, *"commits adultery against her" (Mark 10:1).*

Many people resort to several ways to obtain divorce. Thus they change their denomination in order to appeal to the law which rules that if a couple belong to different denominations, then the Islamic law is applied to them. In this case, the court of vital statistics will grant a divorce as per the Islamic law. However, in the eyes of Christianity, such a man is still tied to his first wife, for God says, *"Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matthew 19:6).* If the man, who obtains such a divorce, marries another woman, he will be committing adultery as per God's words in the Bible. He may try to defend himself saying that it was the church that performed the wedding. Our answer to this is either that he deceived the church, or the priest who performed the wedding made a mistake. In both cases the marriage is considered null and void in the eyes of religion, and the relationship is adulterous.

Priests should refrain from marrying divorced people and follow the bible rules. They may refer the matter to the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council for review.

A new bride and her family should investigate and be certain.

### *2. Marrying a divorcee:*

One of the things prohibited by Christianity is marrying divorcees. God says in the Bible:

*"Whoever marries a woman who is divorced, commits adultery" (Matthew 5:32, 19:9).*

*"Whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband, commits adultery" (Luke 16:18).*

*"And if a woman divorces her husband, and marries another, she commits adultery" (Mark 10:12).*

In this type of marriage both man and woman commit adultery. Why? The reason is that divorce must have taken place either for adultery or for some other reason. If divorce took place for any other reason but adultery, it would then be null and void and the first marriage would still be considered valid. The woman in this case would be married to two men at the same time; hence she would be an adulteress.

However, if the woman was divorced for adultery on her part, her punishment would be that she remain single and not get married, since she would not be trusted in a new marriage. In case some people protest that the Lord Jesus had forgiven the adulteress, we would say that this forgiveness would save her from eternal condemnation, but it would not be right for her to remarry in this life, to keep with the commandment of Jesus Christ Himself who established this law.

### *3. Consanguineous marriage:*



It is considered a form of adultery when a man marries a woman who is unlawful for him to marry. An example of this was set by John the Baptist when he confronted Herod saying, *"It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife"* (Mark 6:18). A list of those near of kin is included in the Book of Leviticus (18:6-18). The laws concerning consanguineous marriages are kept at the church.

#### *4. Consanguineous and polygamy:*

This practice is prohibited in Christianity, which considers it as a form of adultery. We have already discussed this subject in detail in the book entitled "The law of monogamy in Christianity".

### **3. Methods of Treatment**

Methods of treatment concerning this sin center around two aspects: negative and positive ones.

The negative aspects are an escape from sin, by staying away from all things that excite and lead to sinfulness, and an escape from idleness.

The positive aspects are the exploitation of man's energy and emotions in the field of spirituality through love of God that expels love of sinfulness and through love of people that helps one stay away from sinful love.

#### ***Avoiding All That May Excite And Lead To Sinfulness:***

Escape is the best method of treatment from the sin of adultery. In this regard, the sage exclaims in wonder: *"Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, and his feet not be seared? So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife"* (Proverbs 6:27-29).

Do not assume that getting exposed to sinfulness is a form of courage. No, it is not, for it is rather a form of dangerous risk, and any such desire indicates that the heart is impure. He who is virtuous escapes from sins and does not respond to them.

You have to escape from all that strains you and causes your downfall, remembering in so doing the words of the Bible: *"Remember therefore from where you have fallen and repent"* (Revelation 2:5). Escape from sinful sights, hearings, readings, visits, and meetings that may attract you towards sinfulness. Escape from wicked friendships and relationships. Your true friend is the one who draws you closer to God.

If at night you are attacked by foul dreams, do not go back to them by reviewing them in your thoughts during the day. Otherwise, it will be counted as a fall.

Beware of letting sinful thoughts come to you through your rebuking yourself by reviewing your sins. However, in case you want to place your sin before your eyes at all times, recall it in a general way, but be absolutely careful not to delve into recalling details, for lustful sins in particular may come back through remembering their details. This perhaps is what is meant by the words of the priest performing Mass when he says in the Reconciliation Prayer: "Recollection of evil that brings about death".

Escape from the substance of sinfulness. Saints have said that he who is close to the substance of sinfulness has two wars to wage: one on the inside and one on *the outside*. He who is close to the substance of sinfulness is

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easy to fall, for he will be like a person standing close to a well into which his enemy is capable of pushing him. If this person is far away from the well, God will send someone to save him before his enemy, whose intention is to throw him into it, succeeds in dragging him to it.

Escape also from your own self if being alone with it may end up in your fall. You should know that seclusion is not merely that, for it should be a sitting with God and being alone with Him. Therefore, your sitting with people is better than being by yourself with the Devil and his defiling thoughts.

### ***Escape From Sinful Thoughts:***

First, escape from all that may bring about your sinful thinking.

If sinful thoughts come your way, resist and do not give in to them, and set the words of the Apostle before your eyes: *"bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5).*

You may resist sinful thinking by occupying your mind with some other form of thought, such as prayer, meditation, reading, studying, or thinking about any financial or social problem, or about some useful project. The more profound, powerful, and concentrated the new thought is, the more capable it is of chasing away the first defiling thought. If you are unable to chase one thought by resorting to another, occupy yourself with manual work or with a harmless means of entertainment. This will dispel your thoughts and prevent them from being alone with you.

If thoughts go on bothering you, occupy yourself by talking with people, for you cannot talk with them and have sinful thoughts at the same time.

### ***Escape From Drifting Away With The Current:***

It is not purposeless that the church asks us to include the following Psalm in the early morning prayer: *"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1).* Therefore, escape from the evil environment lest you should slip into it.

You may have some frivolous companions who may invite you to have fun with them. If you refuse, they will mock you. However, do not go along with them, and do not drift away with their current. Keep your spiritual principles and let the people say about you whatever they want to say. Do not tread the path of sinfulness driven by your fear of what people may say. People's talk does not stand for the perfection you are seeking, and is not an excuse to save you on Judgment Day. Moreover, a person, whose personality is strong, leads and is not led.

It is not right for us to follow the world in its form of entertainment, its fashions, its frivolity, its jesting, and its permissiveness, for the Apostle tells us: *"And do not be conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2),* which means not to be like it for we are the image of God and His example.

### ***Beware Of Giving In:***

Beware of the first step, for every step in sinfulness may lead to another. If, however, you slip into taking one of the steps of sinfulness, do not despair, and do not give in to another. Do not say to yourself, "it is useless, now that I have fallen". Despair will weaken your will-power and will make you surrender. Beware of it.

## The Seventh Commandment

Sin does not rest until it has become complete. Therefore, do not give it the chance to accomplish this. If you commit adultery through sight or hearing, repent and do not move on to adultery through thinking. If you have already arrived at committing adultery through thinking, escape and do not move on to adultery through the heart and lust. If you fall into lust, do not complete it through action. Struggle and resist remembering the Apostle's admonition to us, *"You have not yet resisted bloodshed, striving against sin" (Hebrews 12:4)*.

Saint Isaac said: *"The victorious soldiers are not the only ones that are crowned, for so also are the soldiers whom the enemy have beaten and broken their limbs, since they did struggle and fight bravely on without surrendering"*. So be like them.

### ***Escape From Idleness:***

Leisure and idleness are the greatest enemies of youth. Conversely, a busy person is not free to think of sexual matters. He does not also have the time to participate in futile and shameless meetings. Therefore, the majority of those who are occupied are not attacked by sins.

A hard-working student, who is persistent in his studies and mindful of his future, in no way speculates about sin. Moreover, since his mind is at rest from these sinful thoughts, he is mostly devoted to his studies, for one strengthens the other.

Therefore, be a productive person. Be one who knows the value of his time and life and who invests every minute in what is of benefit. Fill your time with work, prayers, spiritual meetings, service, reading, and acquiring knowledge. All these will not afford you the chance to think about sin. Moreover, extensive work uses up that extra energy that the youth possess and does not allow it to wage a sexual war against them. This extra energy may have its source in the natural heat of the young or in the amount of rich food that the young consume in their years of growth.

This leads us to a discussion of the positive treatment of this sin through the love of God and of the people.

### ***Love of God:***

If God's love takes over man's heart, it drives out his love of sin. Rather, it makes him hate it, shrink from it, and remain unaffected by it. Spiritual feelings take him over giving him strength to resist sin.

In order for a person to avoid adultery, it is not enough for him to escape from its causes: he has also to fortify the inside of his heart with God's love. This is attained through the media that bring about God's grace: i.e., prayer, meditation, reading the Holy Bible, spiritual books and biographies of saints, regular attendance of church mass and spiritual meetings, self-judgment, confession, communion, fasting, invocation, service, and following spiritual friendships and good examples.

Through these spiritual media, man's heart is purified, and he becomes inherently strong. If he is faced with war, he struggles and does not stumble. If, however he falls, it will be a light one, and he soon stands up and repents.

### ***Energy and Emotion:***

The whole problem of sex centers around the wrong or physical orientation of two aspects: energy and emotion.

Energy, which is an extra bodily heat, is one of the characteristics of the youthful age. If it is not well-oriented it becomes easy for it to destroy the young. Leaders and educators of young people try to have this energy consumed through physical education, trips and various activities in both the intellectual and bodily fields. On the other hand, men of the spirit are interested in exploiting this energy in the field of worship, service, integrity in work, and activities within the church.

As for emotion, young age is one of emotion and rashness, especially if the person in question is naturally emotional and rash. In addition, some young person may be deprived of this emotion at home or within his environment. It may also happen, for some particular reasons, that he is deprived of love, kindness, compassion and emotional interchange. Hence, his problem becomes one of compensating all these in a wrong way.

On the other hand, a person who is emotionally satisfied is less liable to fall from the sexual point of view. Therefore, it is mandatory that the youth's emotions be satisfied in a sound spiritual way.

The best way to accomplish this is through God's love, a more profound one does not exist. It is a love that when people encountered, they gave up their families, friends, money, position, and everything else, driven by their love for the King, Jesus Christ. In close connection with this love of God is love for the church, enthusiasm for it, and zeal for the salvation of people's souls, their reaching up for God, and their adherence to Him. Hence such a service becomes a principal factor in the emotional satisfaction of man on a spiritual level that is higher and deeper than the bodily one.

Generally speaking, those who pursue the media of grace, who adhere to God's love, and who are active in the service are the least indulgent in the sexual aspect. When man's spirituality weakens, sin starts waging its war against him.

A mere visit to a patient, sympathizing with a grieving person, sitting with children in a class for church education, or sitting with children in an orphanage is enough to fill the heart with sublime feelings that are capable of erasing all thought related to sexual matters. However, it is mandatory that man should continue to do this service in depth and love, and in a spiritual way.

### ***What Remains After That?***

What remains after that is for us to say that a life of purity and chastity requires the special assistance of the Holy Spirit. This assistance is acquired through the spiritual way of living and through the constant pursuit of prayer.

This life also requires that man stays away from condemning others, for this condemnation of anyone else causes God's grace to gradually abandon man until he falls and feels that he is too weak to condemn anyone.

Our kind and righteous God, who bestowed chastity upon Augustine, Pelagia, Miriam the Copt and many of the other fallen ones, is capable of bestowing it upon all His people, especially the strugglers and the humbled among them.