

*Looks  
meaningful*

Feature Article

# It's Just a Little Fling.... No Harm Done--Right?

by Roderick C. Meredith

Adultery! It seems everybody's doing it--whether high government officials, members of the British royal family or celebrities of all stripes. Even well-known religious leaders have been involved.

Turn on the television during the day and you'll see soap operas filled with the most bizarre adulterous affairs imaginable. Or so you think--until you flip over to one of the talk shows and hear about some poor woman whose husband is having an affair with her brother! Watch TV in the evening and you'll find extramarital sex quite acceptable on just about any drama or sitcom you turn to.

A recent issue of *Glamour* magazine published an article that explained: "Why Women Are Cheating and Not Feeling Guilty." Referring to classic literature, it notes, "Madame Bovary took a lover, then took arsenic. Anna Karenina threw herself under the 9:02 from St. Petersburg. *Boy, have times changed*" (Amy Pagnozzi, April 1996, p. 256). *Glamour* asked its readers to write and explain why they've had affairs. From the responses they concluded, "The Great Romance Affair was by far the most common extramarital relationship cited by *Glamour's* respondents.... If a woman wants sex, it's usually easy to find. But romance--all the lead-up to sex--can be a rare prize. You may go without it for so long that you don't even know it's missing. Then, out of the blue, someone appears at your side and revives rapture. It's hard to feel guilty when you feel so good" (p. 257).

Another article in the March/April issue of *Mirabella* on "The Affair '96" suggests, "Women... 'find themselves' through adultery these days, and it is celebrated all over the place in pictures that range from the sublime *The Piano* to the ridiculous *Scarlet Letter* to the sublimely ridiculous *Queen Margot* [all recent movies]. The fact that these are all period pieces is no accident: **These movies imply that marriage itself is a relic of an obsolete culture**" (p. 83).

Is marriage a "relic of an obsolete culture"? Why did God institute laws regulating this relationship? Is there a meaningful purpose for marriage that our modern society needs to understand? Should sexuality be expressed solely within marriage--or is adultery okay? What are the answers?

## The Seventh Commandment

Let there be no confusion. The Ten Commandments of God are NOT obsolete. The law of gravity still applies and so do the laws of God. Almighty God devoted two of these commandments to protecting home and family relationships. In the March issue of *The World Ahead*, I wrote about the first of these: "Honor your father and your mother."

The other law that directly governs the home and family is the seventh commandment: "You shall not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14). The Creator instituted this command to safeguard the honor and sanctity of matrimony and to protect the basis of all decent society--the family.

The letter of this law directly prohibits adultery as violating the holy rights of marriage. The spirit of the law expands its regulatory jurisdiction to include premarital sexual conduct as well. Sexual unfaithfulness,

whether before or during marriage, is violating God's Word!

Adultery is a capital offense in the eyes of God: "The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, **shall surely be put to death**" (Lev. 20:10). In our permissive age, we would do well to remember this.

In principle, the seventh commandment also covers every other form of sexual conduct outside marriage—including homosexuality! Many today consider sexual preference a "lifestyle choice." But God lists sodomy as an "abomination" deserving the death penalty (Lev. 20:13; cf. Rom. 1:18-32). The New Testament states that the ultimate penalty of *all* sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

Why will God judge us with eternal death unless we really turn away from adulterous sins? The answer is that godly marriage is so precious, righteous and holy in the Eternal's sight that it must not be defiled! Why? Because of what it means and its great purpose in God's plan.

### Why Marriage?

The true meaning of marriage cannot be understood without first realizing that sex and marriage are God-given and God-ordained. Leaving God out of the picture--as our modern society generally does--degrades the bonds of holy matrimony to some "evolutionary mating instinct."

God had a definite purpose in creating man and woman. After making Adam, God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him" (Gen. 2:18). The Creator knew that the man was incomplete by himself and so decided to give him a partner *suited* for him.

One reason for human marriage, then, is to make man and woman complete. Neither is complete without the other. Alone, man was unable to fulfill the purpose for which he was created. He couldn't learn the character lessons God intended him to. So God put Adam to sleep and took one of his ribs from which He made Eve (vv. 21-22). This was symbolic. "And Adam said: 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman [Heb. *Ishshah*], because she was taken out of Man [Heb. *Ish*].' Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (vv. 23-24).

God showed that Adam and Eve were to dwell together as man and wife in one fleshly union--having sexual intercourse (cf. 1 Cor. 6:16). This implies that husband and wife are to share everything in this life, making their physical lives meaningful and complete. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "**Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge**" (Heb. 13:4).

A second purpose of marriage is to give birth to and rear children. God told Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28). Parents are responsible to teach their children the godly way to live, and parents can most effectively accomplish this when their marriage is stable and happy. A nurturing home environment is vital to a child's right development. God places a high value on children. In Malachi 2:15, it is written: "But did He not make them [husband and wife] one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring." It is through the family relationship that character lessons in patience, understanding and kindness can best be learned. And no place is more conducive to developing a sense of decency, loyalty and responsibility than a happy and well-balanced household.

Therefore, along with making us complete and reproduction, a third reason for sex and marriage is to provide an ideal environment for character building. The Kingdom of God and His law are based firmly