

Hebrews 13:3-4 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

- Hebrews 13:1
- Hebrews 13:2
- Hebrews 13:3
- Hebrews 13:4
- Hebrews 13:5
- Hebrews 13:6
- Hebrews 13:7
- Hebrews 13:8
- Hebrews 13:9
- Hebrews 13:10
- Hebrews 13:11
- Hebrews 13:12
- Hebrews 13:13
- Hebrews 13:14
- Hebrews 13:15
- Hebrews 13:16
- Hebrews 13:17
- Hebrews 13:18
- Hebrews 13:19
- Hebrews 13:20
- Hebrews 13:21
- Hebrews 13:22
- Hebrews 13:23
- Hebrews 13:24
- Hebrews 13:25

CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST
Click chart to enlarge
Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission
Swindoll's Chart, Interesting Pictorial Chart of Hebrews, Another Chart

The Epistle to the Hebrews				
INSTRUCTION Hebrews 1-10:18				EXHORTATION Hebrews 10:19-13:25
Superior Person of Christ Hebrews 1:1-4:13	Superior Priest in Christ Hebrews 4:14-10:18			Superior Life In Christ Hebrews 10:19-13:25
BETTER THAN PERSON Hebrews 1:1-4:13	BETTER PRIESTHOOD Heb 4:14-7:28	BETTER COVENANT Heb 8:1-13	BETTER SACRIFICE Heb 9:1-10:18	BETTER LIFE
MAJESTY OF CHRIST	MINISTRY OF CHRIST			MINISTERS FOR CHRIST
DOCTRINE				DUTY

DATE WRITTEN:

ca. 64-68AD

See [ESV Study Bible "Introduction to Hebrews"](#)
(See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

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Hebrews 13:3 **Remember** the **prisoners**, as **though** in **prison** with them, and **those** who are **ill-treated**, **since** you **yourselves also** are in the **body**. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [mimneskesthe \(2PPPM\) ton desmion os sundedemenoi](#), ([RPPMPN](#)) [ton kakouchoumenon](#) ([PPPMPG](#)) [os kai autoi ontes](#) ([PAPMPN](#)) [en somati](#).

Amplified: Remember those who are in prison as if you were their fellow prisoner, and those who are ill-treated, since you also are liable to bodily sufferings. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

NIV: Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering. ([NIV - IBS](#))

NLT: Don't forget about those in prison. Suffer with them as though you were there yourself. Share the sorrow of those being mistreated, as though you feel their pain in your own bodies. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Think constantly of those in prison as if you were prisoners at their side. Think too of all who suffer as if you shared their pain. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: Be constantly mindful of those in bonds as bound with them, of them who are suffering ill-treatment as also yourselves being in a body.

Young's Literal: be mindful of those in bonds, as having been bound with them, of those maltreated, as also yourselves being in the body;

REMEMBER THE PRISONERS AS THOUGH IN PRISON WITH THEM AND THOSE WHO ARE ILL-TREATED : mimneskesthe (2PPPM) ton desmion os sundedemenoi (RPPMPN) ton kakouchoumenon (PPPMPG):

- Heb 10:32,34, 6:10,11,11:36 Ge 40:14,15,23; Je 38:7-13; Mt 25:36,43; Acts 16:29-34; 24:23; 27:3; Ep 4:1; Php 4:14-19; Col 4:18; 2Ti 1:16-18
- [Hebrews 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 13:1-3 Let Love Continue](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 13:4 The Right and Wrong Place for Sex](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 13:1-4 Love, Sex, and Marriage](#) - John MacArthur

LET LOVE OF THE BRETHREN CONTINUE BY... REMEMBERING THE IMPRISONED BRETHREN

You may be saying "How can I apply this passage in America?" Read on...

First, a proper understanding of the Cultural Context (context = "king" for accurate interpretation) helps one to accurately interpret the sense of this passage. In the first century, followers of Christ could be (and were) arrested and imprisoned not for any specific criminal activity but simply for believing in Jesus Christ as **Lord** (Ro 10:9, 10-note).

In America believers are not (yet) arrested for believing in Jesus as the **Only Way** to the Father (Jn 14:6, Acts 4:12, cp Acts 5:41), but many believers suffer throughout the world and are being called daily to suffer for their faith in Jesus. How we need to pray for them and share with them as the Lord enables us!

You may be reading Hebrews 13:3 and thinking "There are not any of my brethren in prison." Wrong! Maybe

there are none imprisoned for their faith in America (yet!), but there are fellow members of the Body of Christ in prison and in harm's way in other countries, especially those countries which are fanatically and radically opposed to the proclamation and practice of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Let me encourage you prayer warriors out there (I am convicted just writing this, for this should be ALL of us!) to go to the following website and to lift up your persecuted, even imprisoned brethren to the throne of grace that they might receive mercy and find grace to help in the "nick of time" (Hebrews 4:16-note). Go to one of the following sites where you find descriptions of many of our brothers and sisters in Christ, whom you will be able to continually remember ! Don't procrastinate for God has privileged us with the power of prayer which gives us what the world refers to as "the opportunity of a lifetime!"

CLICK THE FOLLOWING LINKS & REMEMBER THE BRETHREN...

- [THE VOICE OF THE MARTYRS — NEWSROOM](#)
- [THE PRAYER ROOM](#)
- [THE PRISONER ALERT!](#)

Remember (3403) (**mimnesko** through the idea of fixture in mind or of mental grasp) means to recall information from memory, but without necessarily implying that one has forgotten what is recalled. To recollect. To remind oneself.

Remember is in the **present imperative** calling for the readers to continually keep the prisoners in mind (in context very likely the ones who had been imprisoned for their faith in Messiah).

Mimnesko - 23x in 23v - Mt 5:23; 26:75; 27:63; Lk 1:54, 72; 16:25; 23:42; 24:6, 8; Jn 2:17, 22; 12:16; Acts 10:31; 11:16; 1Co 11:2; 2Ti 1:4; Heb 2:6; 8:12; 10:17; 13:3; 2Pe 3:2; Jude 1:17; Rev 16:19. **NAS** = recall(1), remember(13), remembered(8), remembrance(1).

This command to **continually remember** the prisoners would have been very practical because under Roman law persons could be retained in prison until punishment was meted out. Those who were enduring lengthy stays in prison often had to depend on outside sources for daily sustenance. In addition, obedience by the saints to this command carried potentially serious consequences, because those who aided the prisoners ran the risk of also being viewed as those who should be themselves placed in prison! And thus to obey this command could mean one would have to "**count the cost**" in a big way!

In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus made it clear that to minister to a prisoner in the name of Christ was to minister to Christ Himself (Mt 25:36, 40 - see below). When **Jesus** returns in His glory (Mt 25:31, 32, cp Zech 14:5, Mt 24:30, 31, Mk 13:26, 27, Lk 21:27) as **King of kings and Lord of lords** (Rev 1:7-note, Rev 19:11-note, Rev 19:16-note) to sit on His throne in Jerusalem (Isa 2:2, 3, 4-note) (**Millennium** or see **Millennial Reign of Christ**), He will have a time of judgment often referred to as the "judgment of the sheep and the goats" (Judgment of the Gentiles - "nations" in Mt 25:32 = *ethnos* - often translated "Gentiles" = Gentiles who survive the horrible time of the **Great Tribulation**). What is fascinating is that the main criteria on which He will judge the Gentiles is whether or not they have exhibited **hospitality**! **Matthew** records the somber scene, the **King** declaring...

'For **I** was hungry, and you gave **Me** something to eat; **I** was thirsty, and you gave **Me** drink; **I** was a stranger, and you invited **Me** in; naked, and you clothed **Me**; **I** was sick, and you visited **Me**; **I** was in prison, and you came to **Me**.'

"Then the righteous (not by their works which He is judging, but justified or declared righteous at a moment in time when by grace they exercised personal faith in the Messiah - Ro 3:24-note, Ro 3:28-note) will answer **Him**, saying, '**Lord**, when did we see **You** hungry, and feed **You**, or thirsty, and give **You** drink? 'And when did we see **You** a stranger, and invite **You** in, or naked, and clothe **You**?

'And when did we see **You** sick, or in prison, and come to **You**?'

"And the **King** will answer and say to them, 'Truly **I** say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of **Mine**, even the least of them, you did it to **Me**.' "Then (expression of time = after He has rewarded the righteous!) He will also say to those on His left, '**Depart** (present imperative) from Me (cp Mt 7:23-note, Lk 13:24, 25, 26, 27-note in both Matthew and Luke Jesus is quoting from Ps 6:8a-note), accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels (Note that hell was not originally prepared for men! cp 2Th 1:6, 7, 8, 9, 10) (Mt 25:35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41)

Comment: The principle is that because believers are now in the binding, unbreakable, eternal, new covenant with Christ by grace through faith, they are identified with Christ, in oneness with Him (**See related discussions: The Exchange of Armor and Belts; Exchange of Armor and Belts; The Oneness of Covenant**). And so when a believer is persecuted for the sake of His Name, this persecution is tantamount to

persecution of Jesus Himself. In short, our Lord "takes it personally" when we are mistreated or afflicted or harassed because of Him! Do you believe this? If you do, it will be a great impediment to attempt to "get even." We as believers now need to return persecution with prayer, blessing and kindness, and leave room for the wrath of God (that's why we need to be praying for them! see Ro 12:14-note, Ro 12:17-note, Ro 12:18, 19, 20, 21-note) Dr Luke alluded to this **"covenant oneness"** principle in his description of Paul's conversion experience on the Damascus Road writing...

And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, **"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"** (cp Paul agreeing with the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts 7:58, 59, 60, 8:1; see also Acts 9:1, 2, 22:3, 4, 5, 26:9, 10, 11) And he said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He said, **"I am Jesus Whom you are persecuting."** (Acts 9:3, 4, 5)

Marcus Dods - "Be mindful of those in bonds" (Mt 25:36- see discussion above). This also they had already done (Heb 10:34-note). The motive now urged is contained in the words "as having been bound with them," as fellow-prisoners. ([Hebrews 13 Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

Bengel alludes to how to "remember" writing - remember in your prayers and in your acts of kindness **as bound with them** on account of the unity of the body under the one head, Christ.—in the body) in the natural body, which is not yet withdrawn from adversities, and the dangers which have befallen them. One man experiences great adversity during the whole period of his life, as Jacob: another in youth, as Joseph: another in manhood, as Job: another, finally, in old age; and this admonition is of especial advantage against such an event. ([Hebrews 13 The Critical English Testament](#))

Andrew Murray (The Holiest of All) writes "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; them that are evil entreated, as being yourselves also in the body. We know so well in our own body that when one member suffers all the members suffer with it. The word points to loving union with Jesus and His body on earth as close and real. This feeling of sympathy may and must be as quick and real in the spiritual as in the natural body. We are to feel towards the prisoners and the persecuted as if we ourselves were suffering. We have been admitted to a life in the home and the love of God; they who abide there will learn thus to love. ([Hebrews 13 Commentary - The Holiest of All](#))

Spurgeon - What are some churches but semi-religious clubs, mere conventions of people gathered together? They do not have in them that holy soul that is the essence of unity; there is no life to keep them in entirety. Why, the body would soon become disjointed, and a mass of rottenness, if the soul were not in it; and if the Spirit of Christ is absent, the whole fabric of the outward church begins to fall to pieces. For where there is no life, there can be no true union.

Prisoners ([1198](#)) (**desmios** from **desmeo** = to bind as with chains from **desmon** = band, shackle from **deo** = to bind) describes one who is bound or captive or imprisoned.

Prison with ([4887](#)) (**sundeo** from **sun/syn** = with, speaks of intimate association + **deo** = to bind) means to be bound together with or to be a fellow prisoner.

The **perfect tense** views this as a completed condition, an ongoing state. In other words, they had been imprisoned at a point in time and were still in prison.

Vine - The verb rendered "bound with them," used here only in the New Testament, is in the perfect tense, "having been bound together," suggesting the complete realization and abiding sense of what had taken place.

Ill-treated ([2558](#)) (**kakoucheo** from **kakos** = evil, ill + **echo** = to have) means literally to have affliction or ill treatment. To treat evilly. To ill-treat. In the passive voice it means to suffer ill, to be maltreated, to be tormented, afflicted or harassed.

The **present tense** indicates they were continually tormented, afflicted or harassed. The **passive voice** indicates the maltreatment came from an outside source, in context most likely their Jewish brothers (by race, but not by faith).

Kakoucheo = Only Hebrews 11:37, 13:3. In non-apocryphal Septuagint - 1Ki 2:26;11:39.

The writer used **kakoucheo** to describe the persevering (faithful) suffering of the saints in the "hall of faith" chapter - They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, (present tense = continually; passive voice = being) **ill-treated** (Heb 11:37)

Spurgeon on **ill-treated** - And being likely therefore to take your own turn of suffering, and to need the sympathy of your fellow Christians. Show sympathy to others while they need it, and they will gratefully remember you when you are in bonds or in adversity.

The Pulpit Commentary - The Hebrews were to "remember" the saints who might be in prison. They were to do so "as bound with them;"—a beautiful expression, breathing the aroma of true Christian sympathy. They were to pray earnestly for them, if possible visit them, minister to their wants, and strive to secure their liberation. Brotherly kindness would lead them to conceive of themselves as occupying the position of the sufferers. It would cause them to realize the "bonds" of their brethren as an affliction personal to themselves, just as the elder Brother's love does (Acts 9:4). But, since imprisonment is not the only calamity to which believers are exposed, the apostle proceeds to bespeak sympathy for all who in any way "are evil entreated" for Jesus' sake. We ourselves are liable to the same adversities which our brethren endure. Let us, therefore, identify ourselves with them. It is not enough that we contribute to public charities. Neither do we discharge all our duty when we employ some person as our proxy to care for the sufferers. True Christian sympathy requires that we bring ourselves into personal contact with them. Strength is often received from the glance of a sympathizing eye, or the grasp of a loving hand, or the utterance of a tender word of holy comfort. ([Hebrews 13 Exposition](#))

The following notes are an abstract from the **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** article on **prison** and **prisoner** with most of the details relating to prison in as it was described in the Old Testament

Causes of Imprisonment: It was often necessary to restrict the liberty of individuals who for various causes were a menace to those in authority, without inflicting any corporal punishment, e.g. Joseph's brethren were kept "in ward" three days (Ge 42:19); Shimei was forbidden to pass beyond the boundary of Jerusalem (1Ki 2:36); the person who was caught gathering sticks on the Sabbath was put "in ward" pending his trial (Nu 15:34). In the monarchical period, prophets who criticized the throne were put in prison, e.g. Micaiah by Ahab (1Ki 22:27), Hanani by Asa (2Chr 16:10). Hoshea, after his abortive effort to institute an alliance with So or Seve, king of Egypt, was shut up in prison by Shalmaneser (2Ki 17:4); compare also 2Ki 25:27 (Jehoiachin in Babylon); Jer 52:11 (Zedekiah in Babylon).

Under the Monarchy: The Book of Jeremiah throws considerable light on the prison system of Jerusalem in the later monarchical period. The prophet was put "in the stocks that were in the upper gate of Benjamin, which was in the house of Yahweh" (Jer 20:2). Mere imprisonment was not adequate punishment for the prophet's announcement of Judah's doom; it was necessary to have recourse to the pillory. During the siege of Jerusalem Jeremiah was confined in the "court of the guard, which was in the king of Judah's house" (Jer 32:2, etc.). The "court of the guard" was evidently the quarters of the sentry who guarded the royal palace. According to the narrative of Jeremiah 37, the prophet was arrested on a charge of treachery and put in prison "in the house of Jonathan the scribe" (Jer 37:15). This verse does not necessarily mean that a private house was used as a prison. The words are capable of another interpretation, namely, that a building known as the "house of Jonathan the scribe" had been taken over by the authorities and converted into a jail. We read in the following verse that the house had a "dungeon" (literally, "house of the pit") and "cabins" or "cells."

The Treatment of Prisoners: The data are not sufficient to enable us to give any detailed description of the treatment of prisoners. This treatment varied according to the character of the offense which led to incarceration. Samson during the period of his imprisonment was compelled to do hard labor (Jdg 16:21). Grinding was the occupation of women, and marked the depth of Samson's humiliation. Dangerous persons were subjected to various kinds of physical mutilation, e.g. Samson was deprived of his sight. This was a common practice in Assyria (2 Ki 25:7). The thumbs and great toes of Adonibezek were cut off to render him incapable of further resistance (Jdg 1:6).

Various forms of torture were in vogue. Hanani the seer was put into the pillory by Asa (for "in a prison house" we should render "in the stocks"; see the Revised Version margin). In Jer 29:26 for "prison," we should render "stocks" (so the Revised Version (British and American)) or "pillory," and for "stocks," "collar" (as in the Revised Version margin). the King James Version renders a different Hebrew word by "stocks" in Job (13:27; 33:11). There was a special prison diet (1 Ki 22:27), as well as a prison garb (2 Ki 25:29).

SINCE YOU YOURSELVES ALSO ARE IN THE BODY: os kai autoi ontes (PAPMPN) en somati

- Nehemiah 1:3,4; Ro 12:15; 1Co 12:26; Ga 6:1,2; 1Pe 3:8
- [Hebrews 13:1-3 Let Love Continue](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 13:4 The Right and Wrong Place for Sex](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 13:1-4 Love, Sex, and Marriage](#) - John MacArthur

You yourselves are in the body - This is not an easy phrase to interpret as is even reflected by the different ways the various

translations handle this verse.

I agree with the approach of **Phillip Hughes** who writes that "Our author encourages his readers to remember also those who are ill-treated, that is, those who are enduring indignities and afflictions other than imprisonment because of their Christian witness, adding the important reminder that they also are in the body—by which he means, not, as Calvin and others suppose, that they are fellow members of the one Body of Christ, so that "if one member suffers, all suffer together" (1 Cor. 12:26), true and appropriate though this consideration is, but rather that, as they themselves are leading a bodily existence, the bodily hardships now being experienced by some of their fellow believers could equally well, and perhaps will, be experienced by them too, as indeed, again in "the former days," they had "endured a hard struggle with sufferings," having at times been "publicly exposed to abuse and affliction" (10:32f.). The impostor and the hypocrite betray themselves by their lack of brotherly love and compassion. ([A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews- Philip Edgcumbe Hughes](#))

The translations which hold to a strict literal rendering such as NAS, ESV, KJV, Young's Literal add no bias to suggest it refers to the individual's body whereas the versions below render it in such a way as to favor interpretation as an individual's bodily existence (similar to the preceding note by Hughes)...

HCSB = as though you yourselves were suffering bodily. (or mistreated, since you yourself are in a body)

NET = as though you too felt their torment.

NIV = as if you yourselves were suffering.

NLT = as if you felt their pain in your own bodies.

Modern Language Bible (Berkley) = as though you are suffering physically yourselves.

International Children's Bible = as if you were suffering with them.

Comment: While I agree with the "interpretative bias" of the preceding translations, verses like Heb 13:3 make the point that almost every Bible translation brings some degree of interpretation to the translation. Thus it behooves the careful student of Scripture to carefully observe the context on their own so that they can be aware of the bias of particular version. And this is another reason to try to do serious Bible study in one of the more literal translations - NAS, ESV, KJV, NKJV.

The Handbook on the Letter to the Hebrews summarizes the possibilities...

(1) "Members of the Christian fellowship," understanding "body" in the figurative sense used by Paul (Jerusalem Bible "since you too are in the one body"), is most unlikely. There is no similar text in Hebrews; there is no definite article for "the" in the Greek, and this explanation does not fit in with verse 3a, which in other ways is parallel to 3b.

(2) Many translators think "in (the) body" means "in this mortal life" (compare 2Cor 5.6 and Ro 7.24); Knox "since you are still in the world"; similarly Phillips.

(3) Other common language translations, and some other translations, suggest either:

(a) that the readers should identify themselves in sympathy with those who are ill-treated: Today's English Version as though you were suffering as they are (similarly German Common Language); Translator's New Testament "as if you too shared their lot"; or

(b) that the readers may suffer in the same way in the future: DuCL "for the same can happen to you"; NAB "for you may yet suffer as they do." This is not necessarily implied by the text, though it is perhaps included in (a), which also makes a good parallel with verse 3a, as though. ([The United Bible Societies' New Testament Handbook Series](#))

Marcus Dods comments that most...

likely this expression is merely a strong way of saying that all the members of Christ's body suffer with each, 1Co 12:26, "the maltreated," cf. Heb 11:37; you must be mindful of these "as being yourselves also in the body," i.e., not emancipated spirits, and therefore liable to similar ill-usage and capable of sympathy. A striking illustration of the manner in which the early Christians obeyed these admonitions may be found in the **Apology of Aristides The Philosopher** (Ed: Written circa 125AD when Hadrian visited Athens - the translation below is from the Syriac version):

And when they see a stranger, they take him in to their homes and rejoice over him as a very brother; for they do not call them brethren after the flesh, but brethren after the spirit and in God. (**Read the entire very**

interesting description of the first century Christians [see Roman Numeral **XV**] who gave quite a testimony to the supernatural Spirit filled, Christ life and set a high and holy example for modern believers to imitate - The Apology of Aristides the Philosopher)

The Syriac Apology adds

If they hear that any of their number is imprisoned or oppressed for the name of their Messiah, all of them provide for his needs.

Accordingly in the Martyrdom of Perpetua we read that two deacons were appointed to visit her and relieve the severity of her imprisonment... Westcott gives from early Christian documents a collection of interesting prayers for those suffering imprisonment. ([Hebrews 13 Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

Hebrews 13:4 **Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.** (**NASB: Lockman**)

Greek: [Timios o gamos en pasin kai e koite amiantos. pornous gar kai moichous krinei \(3SFAI\) o theos](#)

Amplified: Let marriage be held in honor (esteemed worthy, precious, of great price, and especially dear) in all things. And thus let the marriage bed be undefiled (kept undishonored); for God will judge and punish the unchaste [all guilty of sexual vice] and adulterous. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

KJV: Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

NIV: Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

NLT: Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery.

Wuest: Let your marriage be held in honor in all things, and thus let your marriage-bed be undefiled, for whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Young's Literal: honourable is the marriage in all, and the bed undefiled, and whoremongers and adulterers God shall judge.

MARRIAGE IS TO BE HELD IN HONOR AMONG ALL: Timios o gamos en pasin

- Genesis 1:27,28; 2:21,24; Lev 21:13-15; 2 Ki 22:14; Pr 5:15-23; Is 8:3; 1 Co 7:2-16; 9:5; 1 Ti 3:2,4,12; 5:14; Titus 1:6
- [Hebrews 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 13:1-3 Let Love Continue](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 13:4 The Right and Wrong Place for Sex](#) - Steven Cole
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LET LOVE OF THE BRETHREN CONTINUE BY HONORING MARRIAGE

Don't forget the context of this paragraph which begins with **let love of the brethren continue**. This charge is the overarching command for the entire chapter and is especially relevant to our present passage. How better to let love of the brethren continue, then to let it continue in marriage between believers!

Related Resources:

- Covenant: As It Relates to Marriage
- [Baker's Evangelical Dictionary - recommended article on marriage](#)

Most authorities feel that this exhortation represents a response and a refutation of the practice of [asceticism](#) which downgraded

the high value God has placed on the institution of **marriage**. **Paul** warned against this practice in his letter to Timothy...

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from (purposeful, deliberate departure from a former position) **the faith** (pistis), (note the source of their "new spirituality"!) paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars (pseudologos = False speakers - Expresses the notion of definite false statements) seared (kauteriazō = branded with a hot iron, English [cauterize](#)!) in their own **consciences** as with a branding iron (The demonic teacher's consciences were so branded by evil that they lost all moral sensitivity and were no longer able to distinguish between right and wrong!), men who **forbid marriage** and advocate abstaining from foods (~**asceticism**), which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good (**including marriage**), and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer. (1Ti 4:1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

The other dangerous extreme in the early church was **libertinism**, which describes one who is unrestrained by conventional (Biblical) morality (the Bible is the only true source of what is moral before a Holy God) leading to personal dissolution (utter lack of moral restraint) and decay of a society that engages in such profane practices.

Some first-century Christian ascetics practiced strict self-denial (from sexual activity) as a "spiritual discipline" and even considered (to quote one source) "virginity as necessary to Christian perfection." This later developed in the second century into what became known as the **Montanist movement**, which spawned celibate monasticism. These individuals falsely concluded that those who choose marriage choose inferior spirituality. **Wrong!** I have been married for 43 years and the greatest sanctifying "tool" in my life is my wife! I am far more "spiritual" with her than I ever would have been without her. The logic (illogic) of these celibates dishonors the God ordained institution of marriage. The ascetics were bad, but the real assault on the integrity and honor of marriage came from the libertines who saw marriage as irrelevant thus pursued unbridled sexual fulfillment. **Also wrong! Very wrong!**

GOING FROM BAD TO WORSE!

Does modern church need this exhortation to honor the marriage bed? Here's a comment from pollster **George Barna** that speaks to the morality crisis in America and even in the church (from a report in 2003)...

The data trends indicate that the moral perspectives of Americans are likely to continue to deteriorate. Compared to surveys we conducted just two years ago, significantly more adults are depicting such behaviors as morally acceptable. For instance, there have been increases in the percentages that condone sexual activity with someone of the opposite gender other than a spouse, abortion (up by 25%), and a 20% jump in people's acceptance of 'gay sex.'... Most of the people we interviewed believe that they are highly moral individuals and identify other people as responsible for the nation's moral decline.

This is reflective of a nation where morality is generally defined according to one's feelings In a postmodern society, where people do not acknowledge any moral absolutes, if a person feels justified in engaging in a specific behavior then they do not make a connection with the immoral nature of that action.

Yet, deep inside, they sense that something is wrong in our society. They simply have not been able to put two and two together to recognize their personal liability regarding the moral condition of our nation. Until people recognize that there are moral absolutes and attempt to live in harmony with them, we are likely to see a continued decay of our moral foundations. The generational data patterns make a compelling case for this on-going slide.

Even most people associated with the Christian faith do not seem to have embraced Biblical moral standards.

Things are likely to **get worse** before they **get better** - and they are not likely to get better unless strong and appealing moral leadership emerges to challenge and redirect people's thoughts and behavior. At the moment, such leadership is absent. ([Read The Barna Report = Morality Continues to Decay](#))

CONCLUSION: The modern church desperately needs to hear and heed Hebrews 13:4!

Marriage ([1062](#)) (**gamos**) described a public ceremony in which a man and a woman entered into a marital relationship and so speaks of a wedding or wedding feast (Jn 2:1). Here in Hebrews 13:4 **gamos** describes the actual state of being married. Eschatologically (prophetic, future) **gamos** refers to the wedding ceremony of the Bridegroom, Christ, with His Bride, the Church, at the outset of the Messianic (Millennial) Kingdom. (Rev 19:7-[note](#), Rev 19:9-[note](#)). By **metonymy** **gamos** is used for wedding hall, the place where the wedding takes place (Mt 22:10)

Gamos = 16x in 16v in **NAS** - Mt 22:2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; 25:10; Lk 12:36; 14:8; Jn 2:1, 2; Heb 13:4; Rev 19:7, 9. **NAS** = marriage(3), wedding(5), wedding feast(7).

Gamos - 4x in 4v in the non-apocryphal Septuagint (Lxx) - Ge 29:22; Esther 1:5; 2:18; 9:22;

Gamos - 21x in 20v in the Apocrypha - Tobit 6:13; 8:19, 20; 9:2, 6; 10:7; 11:19; Tbs. 6:13; 9:2, 5f; 10:8; 12:1; 1Macc 9:37, 41; 10:58; 3Macc 4:8; Wis 13:17; 14:24, 26;

Marriage is to be held in honor among all - The words "is to be held" are added to make the reading more fluid. More literally this reads "honorable the marriage in all". Note also that **honor** (precious) is the **first word** in the Greek for emphasis. This tells you the high and holy value God Himself places on His institution of marriage.

Young's gives us a more literal rendering...

honorable is the marriage in all, and the bed undefiled, and whoremongers and adulterers God shall judge.

Regard for marriage and for the physical intimacy of marriage is an essential aspect of the pursuit of holiness he has just discussed in the previous chapter (Heb 12:14-note).

Honor - The literal rendering is "Precious the marriage in all"

Honor (5093) (**timios** - see study of related verb **timao**) literally speaks of things which are costly, precious or valuable (Re 17:4-note) or of persons who are "precious" and thus are highly regarded, esteemed or honored (Acts 5:34, 17:34). **Timios** describes that which possesses exceptional value (costly, of great worth). **Timios** was used to refer to precious metals and stones.

There are 13 uses of **timios** in the NT - Acts 5:34; 20:24; 1Co 3:12 (referring to works that endure eternally for they are built upon or with "gold, silver and precious stones"); Heb 13:4-note; James 5:7; 1Pe 1:19-note (referring to the "precious blood" of Jesus); 2Pe 1:4-note (the "precious and magnificent promises" of God); Re 17:4-note; Re 18:12-note; Re 18:16-note; Re 21:11-note; Re 21:19-note - observe the striking contrast between the two "women" in the last part of Revelation). The **NAS** translates it - dear(1), honor(1), precious(8), respected(1), very costly(2). The **KJV** translates it - precious 8, most precious 2, more precious 1, dear 1, honourable 1, had in reputation 1

There are 33 uses of **timios** in the Septuagint - 1Sa 3:1; 2Sa 12:30; 1Ki. 5:17; 7:9, 10, 11; 10:2, 10, 11; 1Chr. 20:2; 29:2; 2Chr. 3:6; 9:1, 9, 10; 32:27; Ezra 4:10; Job 28:16; Ps 19:10; 21:3; 116:15; Pr 3:15; 6:26; 8:11, 19; 12:27; 20:6; 24:4; 31:10; Eccl 10:1; Je 15:19; Lam 4:2; Da 11:38; Ho 11:7

Marriage is honored when the husband is the head (1Co 11:3, Ep 5:23-note), the wife submits (1Pe 3:1-note, 1Pe 3:6-note), there is mutual love and respect (1Pe 3:7-note). Marriage vows must not be taken lightly. Marriage means fidelity and commitment to one's spouse. Only as partners honor marriage can sexual union bring its intended fulfillment. (See Pr 5:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23; 1Co 7:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.)

Kent Hughes writes that...

Today radical secular wisdom claims that marriage impedes self-actualization—an unforgivable "sin". The main attacks today are mostly libertine. For many, "marriage" is at best a provisional arrangement between two people (sexual orientation is irrelevant) that can be dissolved whenever one wishes, for any reason. To be sure, not all conventional attitudes toward marriage are as extreme, though there is a growing skepticism regarding love and marriage. As one person sarcastically put it, "Love: temporary insanity curable by marriage."

But what does this have to do with the survival of the church? Everything! I can think of no more efficient way to sink that ship than through adultery and sexual immorality. The reasons are elementary. Immorality perverts theology. I have seen this time and time again with preachers—famous and unknown. They become involved in a secret affair (perhaps several) and yet keep on preaching. But over time an amazing phenomenon takes place—they unconsciously detach themselves from truth. Like the ancient Averroists, they divide truth, so that there is a truth for them and another truth for others. They may not articulate this, but they become practical relativists, and their relativism so eats away at their belief that many, after the trauma of discovery, leave the faith. Tragic shipwreck!

The damage to the church is immense. Preachers caught in such sins suffer a reduction in spiritual ethos. They increasingly sound like old-time railroad conductors who loudly invite people to embark to destinations they themselves have never visited and to which they are incapable of traveling. Powerlessness becomes the hallmark of their rhetoric.

And, of course, they discredit the Word. I can think of no better way to damn the soul of a junior-higher who is just beginning to experience spiritual stirrings than through the fall of a pastor, Sunday school teacher, or other spiritual leader. There can be no more efficient way to dampen the spiritual aspiration of a young family man than adulterous leaders. Because such sin is a particularly lethal sin against the church, I have at times prayed this with my ministerial colleagues: "Lord, if adultery would lie in the future for any of us should we continue to live—then take us home now." Better dead than damage the church! ([Hughes, R. K. Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul. Volume 1. Crossway Books; Volume 2](#))

Ralph Alexander emphasizes the effect of the fall of man on God's institution of marriage...

The fall made human hearts hard toward God and toward each other. The relational aspect of God's image became marred. Rebellion against submission to male leadership was Satan's initial temptation (Ge 3:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 17; contra Ep 5:33; 1Pe 3:1). Male domination and harshness crept into leadership (cf. Col 3:19; 1Pe 3:7). Sin caused polygamy, concubinage, incest, adultery, rape, prostitution, and all kinds of immorality (cf. Lev. 18, 20; Ro 1:26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32) to damage or destroy the marriage relationship. Marriage commitments are violated. Divorce, premarital sex, and couples living together out of wedlock would never have occurred had not sin entered the world. The fall severely damaged the marriage relationship.

For marriage to function now according to God's ideal, believers in Christ need to marry only believers. Whenever God directly brought a man and woman together in marriage, both were believers. Although pagan customs encouraged marriage with anyone (cf. Gen 16), Israel was given explicit commands not to marry foreigners who would lead them to worship foreign deities (Dt 7:1, 2, 3, 4; 13:6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11; 17:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; 20:17; 23:2). New Testament believers are also not to be "unequally yoked" with unbelievers (2Cor 6:14), meaning any action causing the union of believer with nonbeliever, or non-believing ways, must be avoided. ([Baker's Evangelical Dictionary - excellent, recommended article on marriage](#))

Study **Torrey's Topical** collection of Scriptures for an excellent summary of what God says about marriage.

This would make a great Sunday School series or Sermon series -- simply walking through the Scriptures and allowing God to say what He says about the honorable institution of marriage. Is there a desperate need? Did the sun rise this morning! The post-Christian society in American is rapidly and radically jettisoning all Biblical truth related to the divine institution of marriage and in so doing is removing one of the foundational pillars of our society. It is time for the Church of Jesus Christ to take a radical stand for righteousness and holiness!

1. Divinely instituted. Ge 2:24.
2. A covenant relationship. Mal 2:4.
 3. Designed for
 - a. The happiness of man. Ge 2:18.
 - b. Increasing the human population. Ge 1:28; 9:1.
 - c. Raising up godly seed. Mal 2:15.
 - d. Preventing fornication. 1Co 7:2.
 4. The expectation of the promised seed of the woman an incentive to, in the early age. Ge 3:15; 4:1.
5. Lawful in all. 1Co 7:2,28; 1Ti 5:14.
6. Honorable for all. Heb 13:4.
7. Should be only in the Lord. 1Co 7:39.
8. Expressed by
 - a. Joining together. Mt 19:6.
 - b. Making affinity. 1Ki 3:1.
 - c. Taking to wife. Ex 2:1.
 - d. Giving daughters to sons, and sons to daughters. Deut 7:3; Ezr 9:12.

9. Indissoluble during the joint lives of the parties. Mt 19:6; Ro 7:2,3; 1Co 7:39.
10. Early introduction of polygamy. Ge 4:19.
11. Contracted in patriarchal age with near relations. Ge 20:12; 24:24; 28:2.
12. Often contracted by parents for children. Ge 24:49-51; 34:6,8.
13. Should be with consent of parents. Ge 28:8; Jdg14:2,3.
14. Consent of the parties necessary to. Ge 24:57,58; 1Sa 18:20; 25:41.
15. Parents might refuse to give their children in. Ex 22:17; Deut 7:3.
16. The Jews
 - a. Forbidden to contract, with their near relations. Le 18:6.
 - b. Forbidden to contract with idolaters. Deut 7:3,4; Jos 23:12; Ezr 9:11,12.
 - c. Often contracted with foreigners. 1Ki 11:1; Ne 13:23.
 - d. Sometimes guilty of polygamy. 1Ki 11:1,3.
 - e. Careful in contracting for their children. Ge 24:2,3; 28:1,2.
 - f. Betrothed themselves some time before. Deut 20:7; Jdg14:5,7,8; Mt 1:18.
 - g. Contracted when young. Pr 2:17; Joe 1:8.
 - h. Often contracted, in their own tribe. Ex 2:1; Nu 36:6-13; Lk 1:5,27.
 - i. Obligated to contract with a brother's wife who died without seed. Deut 25:5; Mt 22:24.
 - j. Considered being debarred from, a reproach. Is 4:1.
 - k. Considered being debarred from, a cause of grief. Jdg11:38.
 - l. Often punished by being debarred from. Jer 7:34; 16:9; 25:10.
 - m. Were allowed divorce from, because of hardness of their hearts. Deut 24:1; Mt 19:7,8.
 - n. Exempted from going to war immediately after. Deut 20:7
17. Priest not to contract, with divorced or improper persons. Le 21:7.
18. The high priest not to contract, with a widow or a divorced or profane person. Le 21:14.
19. Contracted at the gate and before witnesses. Ru 4:1,10,11.
20. Modes of demanding women in. Ge 24:3,4; 34:6,8; 1Sa 25:39,40.
21. Elder daughters usually given in, before the younger. Ge 29:26.
22. A dowry given to the woman's parents before. Ge 29:18; 34:12; 1Sa 18:27,28; Ho 3:2.
23. Celebrated
 - a. With great rejoicing. Jer 33:11; Jn 3:29.
 - b. With feasting. Ge 29:22; Jdg14:10; Mt 22:2,3; Jn 2:1-10.
 - c. For seven days. Jdg14:12.
24. A benediction pronounced after. Ge 24:60; Ru 4:11,12.
25. The bride
 - a. Received presents before. Ge 24:53.

- b. Given a handmaid at. Ge 24:59; 29:24,29.
- c. Adorned with jewels for. Is 49:18; 61:10.
- d. Gorgeously appalled. Ps 45:13,14.
- e. Attended by bridesmaids. Ps 45:9.
- f. Stood on the right of bridegroom. Ps 45:9.
- g. Called to forget her father's house. Ps 45:10.

26. The bridegroom

- a. Adorned with ornaments. Is 61:10.
- b. Attended by many friends. Jdg14:11; Jn 3:29.
- c. Presented with gifts. Ps 45:12.
- d. Crowned with garlands. Song 3:11.
- e. Rejoiced over the bride. Is 62:5.
- f. Returned with the bride to his house at night. Mt 25:1-6.

27. Garments provided for guests at. Mt 22:12.

28. Infidelity of those contracted in, punished as if married. Deut 22:23,24; Mt 1:19.

29. Illustrative of

- a. God's union with the Jewish nation. Is 54:5; Jer 3:14; Ho 2:19,20.
- b. Christ's union with his church. Eph 5:23,24,32.

AND THE MARRIAGE BED BE UNDEFILED : kai e koite amianto: (Heb 12:16; 1Co 6:9; Ga 5:19,21; Ep 5:5; Col 3:5,6; Re 22:15)

THE BATTLE FOR MARITAL PURITY

Marriage bed... be - The word "marriage" is added but literally it simply reads "bed". Similarly the verb "be" is not present in the Greek but added to give flow to the sentence.

Bed (2845) (koite) literally refers to a place for lying down and rest and thus refers to a bed or bedroom. **Koite** was used also of the den of an animal or the nest of a bird as well as of a box or basket. In certain contexts it was used to refer to the marriage bed, a figurative way to refer to the sexual relationship between a husband and his wife. **Koite** is also used to describe illicit **sexual promiscuity**,

refers to a place or structure on which one can lie down and in this context is

Barclay writes that **koite** "literally means a bed and has in it the meaning of the desire for the forbidden bed. This was the typical heathen sin. The word brings to mind the man who sets no value on fidelity and who takes his pleasure when and where he will. ([Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible Series. Rev. ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press](#))

Koite - 4x in 4v - Here are the other 3 NT uses...

Luke 11:7 and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in **bed**; I cannot get up and give you anything.'

Romans 9:10-note And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had **conceived** twins by one man, our father Isaac;

Romans 13:13-note Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in **sexual promiscuity** and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.

Undefiled (283) (amiantos from **a** = negates what follows + **miaino** = to defile by staining, as with color) means without

contamination, unpolluted, untainted, unstained (stainless), unsoiled, without uncleanness or impurity. The idea is free from that by which the nature of a thing is deformed or debased, or its force or vigor is impaired. In secular Greek writings **amiantos** was used to describe things such as unstained hands, heart, flesh or body. Aeschylus calls the sea simply "the undefiled".

Amiantos - 4x in 4v in NT -- Heb 7:26-note; Heb 13:4; James 1:27-note; 1Pe 1:4-note.

The idea is that our marriage bed should be in perfect condition, free from any spot of moral dirt or ethical pollution, free from any influence that might defile it. We should allow nothing to cheapen the marriage bed in any way.

Just as our future inheritance in heaven is pure and free from anything that would deform it or cause it to lose its vigor, so too should the Christian couple's marriage bed be untainted by moral/ethical impurity.

Matthew Henry adds that "sin and misery, the two grand defilements that spoil this world, and mar its beauty, have no place there.

The undefiled Christian marriage is in marked contrast to an earthly inheritance, all of which is corrupted and defiled (2Pe1:4 [note] "the [corruption](#) that is in the [world](#) by [lust](#).") Corruption cannot touch our inheritance or ever wear out its freshness, brightness, and beauty.

The **writer of Hebrews** uses **amiantos** to describe Jesus, writing that "it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, **undefiled** (**amiantos** - free from any moral or spiritual blemish - not even a taint of sin - Not merely ritual purity [Lev 21:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15] but real ethical cleanness), separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens. (see **note** Hebrews 7:26)

James says real religion is "pure and **undefiled** (**amiantos**)... in the sight of our God and Father... (and is shown to be genuine when we) visit orphans and widows in their distress, and... keep oneself unstained by the world. (Jas 1:27-note)

Trench aptly remarks that "it is a remarkable testimony to the reign of sin, and therefore of imperfection, of decay, of death throughout this whole fallen world, that as often as we desire to set forth the glory, purity, and perfection of that other, higher world toward which we strive, we are almost inevitably compelled to do this by the aid of negatives; by the denying to that higher order of things the leading features and characteristics of this." (see Re 21:1-[note](#) Re 22:3-[note](#))

To keep the **marriage bed undefiled** was a radical concept in the first century Greco-Roman world, and by such supernaturally enabled behavior, the first century believers proved themselves

to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world" (Php 2:15-note, Mt 5:16-note)

Kent Hughes comments that "Christian sexual morality was unique in the pagan world and a source of wonder. And it has become increasingly so today in a world that considers adultery irrelevant, purity abnormal, and sex a "right" (however and with whomever one may get it) and that has invented the egregious (**Ed**: conspicuously bad) term "recreational sex." We Christians are called to be outrageously pure—to be a source of wonder and even derision to this glandular world. From the beginning to the end of Hebrews, the abiding concern of the author has been to so instruct the tiny Hebrew church that it would stay afloat on the increasingly hostile seas of first-century Roman culture. Their ship was a microscopic dot on the massive billows of the official pagan/secular enterprise—and eminently vulnerable. It appeared to outside eyes that the external forces could sink it at will. But the author knew that the internal threat to the church was far more deadly. In fact, he knew that it could ride out any storm if things were right on the inside. He knows that nothing will sink a church faster than moral wavering in respect to sex, materialism, or mental outlook. Here is intimate advice regarding how to keep our ship afloat. It is so essential that any church that ignores it will founder and possibly even sink. (Ibid)

Spurgeon - And terrible will be their doom when God does judge them. They may think that, because they sin in secret, therefore they shall escape punishment; but it shall not be so. Whether men judge them or not, God will judge them.

David Guzik writes that...

Perhaps through a past of sexual sin, many people have a difficult time really believing that the marriage bed is undefiled. Guilt and sexual hang-ups are appropriate to extra-marital sex, but not in marital sex. But this is where the guilt and sexual hang-ups often exist, and where they most frequently cause trouble.

The enemy of our souls wants to do everything he can to encourage sex outside of the marriage bed, and he wants to do everything he can to discourage sex inside the marriage bed. We need to recognize this strategy and not give it a foothold among us.

Though God allows real freedom in the variety of sexual expression in marriage, all must be done with a concern for the other's needs and in love (1Corinthians 7:1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and Eph 5:21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33). ([Commentary](#))

- 1Co 6:9 Ga 5:19,21 Ep 5:5
- Ps 50:16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22; Malachi 3:5; 1Co 5:13; 2Co 5:10
- [Hebrews 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 13:1-3 Let Love Continue](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 13:4 The Right and Wrong Place for Sex](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 13:1-4 Love, Sex, and Marriage](#) - John MacArthur

FIGHT TO KEEP THE MARRIAGE BED UNDEFILED!

For (gar) is a pithy **term of explanation** explaining why we must fight the good fight of faith to keep the marriage bed undefiled. Our joy in both time and eternity are at stake as explained below.

John MacArthur writes that...

The world today is obsessed with sex as never before. Sexual activity apart from marriage is considered acceptable and normal by more and more people.

Fornicators ([4205](#)) (**pornos** from from **pernáō** = sell in turn from **peráō** = to pass thru, as a merchant would do, passing thru and then coming to mean to sell) (see also study of related word **porneia**) means a fornicator, one who is sexually immoral or who commits sexual immorality. **Pornos** originally meant a "male prostitute" but came to be used in the universal meaning of "fornicator" or one who engages in sexual immorality, whether a man or a woman. A **pornos** in secular Greece was a person who prostituted themselves for gain.

Fornicate is from Late Latin *fornicatus*, past participle of *fornicare* to have intercourse with prostitutes, from Latin *fornic-*, *fornix* = arch, vault, brothel. The 1828 Webster's says fornicate means to commit lewdness, as an unmarried man or woman, or as a married man with an unmarried woman.

1828 Webster's defines **fornication** as "The incontinence or lewdness of unmarried persons, male or female; also, the criminal conversation of a married man with an unmarried woman."

The **KJV** translates **pornos** as "**whoremonger**", which describes one who consorts with whores (a lecher). One can carry on the life of a "whoremonger" in "private" on the internet's plethora of sleazy porn sites, in filthy magazines at the newsstand (or even at the checkout stand at the grocery store!), or at the movies (unfortunately even PG Rated can be contaminated with **pornos**). In our local cable listings in Austin, Texas (Summer, 2008) there are some 5-10 channels devoted **solely** to pornography (I don't subscribe to any of them by the way). America is in very serious trouble beloved. Let us pray for revival (2Chr 7:13,14, 6:37, 38, 39)

Pornos - 10x in 10v in the NT -fornicators(2), immoral(2), immoral men(1), immoral people(2), immoral person(1), immoral persons(2). The KJV as noted translates **pornos** with the word **whoremonger** (5 times). 1Cor 5:9, 10, 11; 6:9; Eph. 5:5-[note](#); 1Ti 1:10; describing Esau = Heb 12:16-note; describing those who defile the marriage bed = Heb 13:4-note; describing those who will not be in heaven = Rev 21:8-[note](#); Re 22:15-[note](#). **Pornos** is not found in the non-apocryphal Septuagint.

NIDNTT has this note on the classical Greek uses of this word group...

porneuo from **pernemi** (to sell) (Hdt. onwards), means trans. to prostitute. It is usually in the pass. of the woman: to prostitute oneself, become a prostitute. But it is also used of the man, to whore, to fornicate. Derivations include (a) **porne** (Aristot. onwards), a woman who is for sale, a prostitute, courtesan; (b) **pornos** (likewise Aristot. onwards), the fornicator who has sexual intercourse with prostitutes, but then also an immoral man, i.e. one who allows himself to be misused for immoral purposes for money, a male prostitute; and (c) **porneia** (Dem. onwards, rare in cl. Gk) harlotry, unchastity (also of a homosexual nature).

According to G. van der Leeuw,

"the instincts of sex and hunger are the two great impelling factors whereby the will climbs to power and even rises to heaven; in the face of these the consciousness of impotence collapses. Food and drink on the one hand, and on the other sexual intercourse, are therefore not merely the two outstanding symbols of community with the god, but are also the means wherewith human potency sets to work" (Religion in its Essence and Manifestation, 19642, 230).

For this the most varied religious actions and rites are required. These include cultic prostitution as part of the ancient fertility rites. It was believed that performance of sexual intercourse in the sanctuary (!) would ensure the fertility of everything living in the land and prevent the loss of the procreative and generative faculties. Evidence of cultic prostitution is first found in Babylon. Herodotus recounts that once in her life every Babylonian woman had to "sacrifice" herself to the goddess Mylitta by giving her body to a stranger in the temple precincts (1, 199). Similar customs are attested in other areas, including Cyprus.

In the Greek world cultic prostitution gained acceptance primarily in the great sanctuaries of Corinth, Eryx and Athens. According to the historian Strabo (8, 378), over a thousand courtesans consecrated to Venus lived in Corinth alone... Religious prostitution played a particular role for Israel in the Baal cult. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

Vine in commenting on the use of **pornos** in the description of **Esau** in Hebrews 12:16 says that "the word **pornos** , fornicator, is not to be limited to the idea of spiritual fornication, it includes the actual sin and all such sensual and lustful practices. Esau's profanity consisted not merely in his satisfying his immediate desires and abandoning his birthright, but in treating the holy privileges of the patriarchal family, the priesthood, and the title to the land, and the ancestorship of the Messiah, as of no value compared with the satisfaction of a natural hunger of the moment ("one mess of meat"). The warning is against renouncing our privileges and duty and "the recompense of the inheritance" in order to enjoy an indulgence of the flesh or the pleasures of the world. That is profanity as here described.

Wuest adds that **pornos** is "a man who prostitutes his body to another's lust for hire, a male prostitute, a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse, a fornicator. ([Hebrews - Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

Jon Courson makes a strong statement declaring that "Paul says your heart tells you and your spirit confirms that if you are a whoremonger—if you are delighted by and caught up in pornography—you are not part of the kingdom. You can come to church every time we meet; you can show up every time the doors are open. But if you are involved in this stuff—if this is your **idol** , if this is what you're living for—you're not saved. ([Courson, J. Jon Courson's Application Commentary. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson](#)) (Bolding added)

SEXUAL SIN: FIRST - AGAINST GOD THEN - AGAINST SELF

Remember that sexual sin is first of all a sin against a Holy God (Joseph running from sin with Potiphar's wife = Ge 39:9, David after sin with Bathsheba = 2Sa 12:13, Ps 51:4-[note](#)) Who is obligated by His very nature to judge sin (see Nu 32:23).

Paul explains that sexual sin is also against self in his command to the saints at Corinth to...

Flee (present imperative = Keep on fleeing! We will never reach a point in our life when we can stand in the presence of immorality and be victorious. We must flee now and forevermore! cp 1Co 10:14 - idolatry and sexual immorality are common evil bedfellows) immorality (**porneia**). Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral (porneuo in the present tense = continually immoral) man sins against his own body (Because sexual intimacy is the deepest uniting of two persons, its misuse corrupts on the deepest human level). Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? **For** (term of explanation = The reason that the believer can no longer claim free choices is that he is now the personal property of another) you have been bought with a price (1Pe 1:19-note): therefore (term of conclusion) **glorify** (aorist imperative = Do this now! Don't put it off! Just do it!) God in your body. (1Co 6:18-note, 1Co 6:19-note, 1Co 6:20-note)

Comment: Passion is not rational or sensible, and sexually dangerous situations should be avoided or fled, not debated. Sexual immorality is far more destructive than alcohol, far more destructive than drugs, far more destructive than crime. "Sexual immorality" has a peculiar effect upon the body. The sole purpose of this sin is the gratification of the strong desires (lust) inherent in the flesh (Old Man) and, therefore, it is probably the most selfish of all sins. The internal spiritual sensitivities are wrecked by this sin.

J C Ryle: The violation of the seventh commandment is the sin above all others, that, as Hosea says, "takes away the understanding" (Hosea 4:11). It is the sin that leaves deeper scars upon the soul than any other sin that a man can commit. It is a sin that destroys thousands of young men in every age, and has even overthrown a few of the saints of God in the past. Samson and David are fearful proofs. It is the sin that man dares to smile at, and smooths over using the terms: thrills, love, uncontrollable passions, and natural desires. But it is the sin that the devil rejoices over, for he is the "unclean spirit;" and it is the sin that God abhors, and

declares He "will judge" (Heb13:4). Young men, "Flee from sexual immorality" (1Co 6:18) if you love life. "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient" (Ep 5:6). Flee from the opportunity of it--from the company of those who might draw you into it--from the places where you might be tempted to do it. Read what our Lord says about it in (Mt 5:28). Be like the holy servant Job (who feared God and as a result turned away from evil Job 1:1): (Job 31:1). Flee from talking about it. It is one of the things that ought not even be hinted about in conversation. You cannot even touch black grease without getting your hands dirty. Flee from the thoughts of it; resist them, destroy them, pray against them--make any sacrifice rather than give way to them. Imagination is the hotbed where this sin is too often hatched. Guard your thoughts (Pr 4:23), and there will be little fear about your actions.

C. T. Studd: I had known about Jesus dying for me, but I never understood that if He died for me, then I didn't belong to myself... If I belong to Him, either I had to be a thief and keep what wasn't mine, or else I had to give up everything to God. When I came to see that Jesus Christ had died for me, it didn't seem hard to give up all for Him.

THOUGHT - Perhaps this passage in Hebrews 13:4 is difficult to read because you have fallen into the snare of sexual sin via a work or counseling situation (with a person of the opposite sex) or become enticed and ensnared by the internet (pornographic images, lewd videos on youtube, iphones giving internet access anywhere, anytime [including face time phone calls]!, chat rooms leading to inappropriate liaisons, social networks like facebook, twitter being abused and misused, etc, etc - when these "tools" which can be used for good become perverted Romans labels those who pervert them as "inventors of evil"! Ro 1:30-note), which is tragically becoming a soul deadening, joy killing, rest and peace stealing "epidemic" even among genuine followers of Christ! These things ought not to be beloved!

Read the warning and the promise of Solomon...

He who conceals (Hebrew verb is intentional/intensive - It means to intentionally, actively cover over so as to keep secret - contrast Ps 32:1-note) his transgressions will not prosper (will not experience victory from the Lord, spiritual prosperity, thrive spiritually, accomplish satisfactorily what God intended), **But (contrast)** he who confesses and forsakes them (Did you catch that? Not just confession but **repentance** a God given desire and power to turn away from the sin that so easily entangles) will find compassion. (Pr 28:13)

Comment: Hiding sin does not pay off. Solomon's father David knew this from experience (Ps 32:3, 4-note). It is far better to deal with sin by confessing and renouncing it. As David found out, confession results in God's mercy and forgiveness (Ps 34:5-note; Ps 51:1-12-note).

Don't sweep sin under the rug.
Instead put it under the blood!

There are two kinds of forgiveness, judicial and parental. When we trust Christ as Lord and Savior, we receive forgiveness from the penalty of sins which is judicial forgiveness. When we now as believers confess our sins, we receive parental forgiveness (1Jn 1:9) which maintains fellowship with God our Father. Anyone who confesses and forsakes his sins has the assurance that God not only forgives but forgets (Heb 10:17-note). We too need to forget (Php 3:13-note) and press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Php 3:14-note). Amen

***The sins that would entangle us
Must never be ignored;
For if we try to cover them
They'll pierce us like a sword.***

J Vernon McGee: This is a great proverb. It seems a common practice today for Christians to try to cover their sins. You will find in the average church that there is a Band-Aid of silence wrapped over the cancer of sin. People don't like to talk about it; in fact, they don't admit its existence. They like to think they are very good.

To summarize, these two sexually related sins are distinguished as follows and thus leave no reader relieved of the obligation to follow the charge in Hebrews 13:4...

Pornos = Unmarried & impure Moichos = Married & impure

Bruce - Fornication and **adultery** are not synonymous in the New Testament: adultery implies unfaithfulness by either party to the marriage vow, while the word translated "fornication" covers a wide range of sexual irregularities.

Adulterers (3432)(**moichos** cp study of related word **moichalis** = adulteress) describes one who is unfaithful to a spouse. Figuratively, **moichos** describes one who is faithless toward God.

Moichos - 3x in **NAS** - here in Hebrews 13:4 and in...

Luke 18:11 The (self-righteous) Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, **adulterers**, or even like this tax collector.

Comment: This Pharisee was self-deceived by his self-righteousness which was like filthy rags in the sight of God to Whom the only acceptable righteousness is the perfect righteousness of His sinless Son Jesus Christ and the only way to obtain that acceptable righteousness is by grace through faith, believing you are a sinner destined for hell but accepting and receiving and believing the "price paid in full" for your eternal redemption in Christ!

1Corinthians 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God (cp Jn 3:3 = Paul is referring to those who give no evidence of having been born again or regenerated by the Holy Spirit)?

Do not be deceived (present imperative with a negative means "Stop being deceived" implying they being deceived - this deception is especially deadly and dangerous because it can deceive the one deceived all the way into the reality of an eternal torment in hell! Woe!); neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor **adulterers**, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,

Moichos - 3x in non-apocryphal **Septuagint (Lxx)**- Ps 50:18; Pr 6:32; Job 24:15; Isa 57:3

See related resource = on site commentary dealing with sexual sins in Proverbs:

- Proverbs 5:1-14 Commentary
- Proverbs 5:15-23 Commentary
- Proverbs 6:20-35 Commentary
- Proverbs 7:1-27 Commentary

Moichos - 2x in **Apocrypha** - Wis 3:16; Sir 25:2;

The Lord's purpose for His creation of Adam and Eve was that it was to be a permanent, monogamous marriage (Ge 2:21, 22, 23, 24; Mt 19:4, 5, 6), with children raised in the corresponding family unit. Any other type of sexual relationship is wrong (NO MATTER WHAT SOCIETY SAYS!), whether pre-marital, extra-marital, homosexual, incestuous or anything else. How serious is this issue?

John Piper emphasizes that...

God created us in his image, male and female, with personhood and sexual passions so that when he comes to us in this world there would be these powerful words and images to describe the promises and the pleasures of our covenant relationship with him through Christ.

God made us powerfully sexual so that he would be more deeply knowable. We were given the power to know each other sexually so that we might have some hint of what it will be like to know Christ supremely.

Therefore, all misuses of our sexuality (adultery, fornication, illicit fantasies, masturbation, pornography, homosexual behavior, rape, sexual child abuse, bestiality, exhibitionism, and so on) distort the true knowledge of God. God means for human sexual life to be a pointer and foretaste of our relationship with him. (Read or listen to the full message [Sex and the Supremacy of Christ, Part 1 2004 Desiring God National Conference](#))

Paul writes...

For (1Th 4:1, 2-note) this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality (cp 1Pe 2:11-note); that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God (1Th 4:3-note, 1Th 4:4, 5-note)

Comment: Notice that the will of God is not unclear in the area of sexuality. Note also that followers of Christ are to be radical in the midst of a sexually permissive society. Notice that the problem with the pagans gives us a strong clue to the solution for believers. Dear married believer, if you are having difficulty obeying Hebrews 13:4, note that the solution is first of all to "**know God**" because not knowing God is the root cause of lust. As **John Piper** explains...

Paul doesn't mean that mere head knowledge about God overcomes lust. In Mk 1:24 Jesus is about to cast a demon out of a man when the unclean spirit cries out, "I know

who you are, the Holy One of God!" In other words, Satan and his hosts have some very accurate knowledge of God and Jesus, but that is not the kind of knowledge Paul has in mind here. The knowledge he has in mind here is knowledge of God described in 2Cor 4:6-note -- **the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ**(Gal 4:8; 1Co 2:14; 2Pe 1:3, 4-note). It's the knowledge of God's greatness and worth and glory and grace and power. It's knowledge that stuns you, and humbles you. It's knowledge wins you and holds you (2Pe 3:11,12-note, 2Pe 3:14-note, 2Pe 3:17-note) It's the kind of knowledge that you don't have when you say ho-hum during the Hallelujah Chorus or grumble on the rim of the Grand Canyon. Hearing they do not hear and seeing they do not see. It's not that kind of knowledge. It comes like it did for Lydia when the Lord opened the eyes of her heart (Acts 16:14). At one moment you think you will burst with its fullness and suddenly there is a chasm of longing for more. It's the knowledge we call faith -- the assurance of things hoped for the conviction of things not seen (Heb 11:1-note).

It's a knowledge that is so real, so precious, so satisfying to your soul that any thought any attitude any emotion any addiction which threatens to hinder this knowledge will be attacked with all the spiritual zeal of a threatened life. This is the fight of faith that rages in the godly soul when lust lures the mind away from God. ([Battling the Unbelief of Lust - Desiring God](#))

It is noteworthy that of all the exhortations in Hebrews 13, the only one associated with a judgment warning is Hebrews 13:4!

John MacArthur warns...

God is serious about sexual purity--very serious. You may fool around with illicit sex, you may fool around outside your marriage, and you may get away with it from the judgment of man standpoint, but you'll never get away with it from the judgment of God. God will judge; somehow and someday chastisement, punishment comes...

Some of the more obvious results of such views are the heartbreaking increases in extramarital pregnancies, forcible rapes, illegitimate births (despite birth control measures and abortions), and in venereal diseases of all sorts. Billy Graham has commented that writings coming out of contemporary authors are "like the drippings of a broken sewer." Judgment already exists in the broken homes, the venereal disease, the psychological and physical breakdowns, and the murder and other violence that is generated when passion is uncontrolled. It is not possible to live and act against the moral grain of the universe established by God and not suffer terrible consequences.

When Christians are immoral, the immediate consequences may even be worse, because the testimony of the gospel is polluted. ([MacArthur, John: Hebrews. Moody Press](#))

When Christians commit sexual sins (believers are not immune unfortunately), **God will** (must) **judge** us because He is holy, righteous and just and He desires a holy people whose lights are not tarnished and dim and dirty but bright and pure and holy. And thus He will take us out to His "holy woodshed" and "beat the hide off of us" (no sacrilege intended - see note below), the writer of Hebrews explaining this divine judgment on believers...

You have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE **SCOURGES** (mastigoo = literally flog Mt 10:17, Jn 19:1, figuratively "whip our hide") EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."...

THE GLORIOUS BENEFITS OF DIVINE DISCIPLINE

For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may [share His holiness](#). All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the [peaceful fruit of righteousness](#) (right living before God and man, clean conscience, pure heart, holy devotion, etc). (Hebrews 12:5, 6-note, Heb 12:10-note, Heb 12:11-note)

Comment: Believers also do well to frequently ponder the judgment seat of Christ and let this future truth motivate our present battle against lust, for Peter warns us that this will be a life long struggle - we will continually battle against the strong desires to gratify self sexually while we are in these fallen, mortal bodies...

Beloved, I urge you as **aliens** and **strangers** (It does us good to frequently remind ourselves that this fallen godless, God hating world is not our home. PTL!) to **abstain** (present tense = continually ~ continual need to hold ourselves away from snares that would tempt us - see James 1:14-note) from **fleshly lusts** (strong desires to gratify needs in an non-God honoring way!), which wage war (present tense = This is a continual war manifest by many battles and will not cease until we see Jesus face to face) against the soul. (1Peter 2:11-note)

Discipline (**present imperative** = Keep on doing this -- all of your life beloved!) yourself for the purpose of godliness for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. (1Timothy 4:7, 8-note)

Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire. (1Corinthians 3:12, 13, 14, 15)

Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him (eg, in the context of the current discussion - Ge 39:9). For we must **all** (this is for believers only) appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2Corinthians 5:9-note, 2Corinthians 5:10-note)

God will judge sexual sin in marriage. As alluded to in the previous passages there eternal consequences for believers but there are also a different genre of eternal consequences for men and women who **habitually** practice such sins. If sexual sins constitute one's lifestyle, then that person in plain English, is not a genuine believer and is destined for eternal torment. Paul makes this very clear in his warning in first Corinthians writing...

Or do you not know that the unrighteous **shall not inherit the kingdom of God**? **Do not be deceived**; (**present imperative** with a negative = Stop being deceived by your sin - see Heb 3:13-note for the power of sin to deceive.) neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, **shall inherit the kingdom of God** (cp Jn 3:3 for who inherits this kingdom). (1Cor 6:9, 10)

Comment: Notice that twice Paul states that people who practice such sins will not inherit God's kingdom! Once should have been enough to get our attention but twice makes this doubly sobering! It is important to note that a Christian may fall into these sins and be forgiven, as was David, but no genuine follower of Christ continuously practices such sins (Read 1Jn 3:1-10 for description of a true believer).

God will judge sexual sin in marriage as Jesus sternly warned...

You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell. (Mt 5:27-note, Mt 5:28-note, Mt 5:29-note, Mt 5:30-note)

Comment: Note our Lord's definition of "**adultery**"! This is serious business! Take a moment and **John Piper's** discussion of whether a practice such [masturbation](#). is a sin against God and self!

John Piper adds: I have learned again and again from first hand experience that there are many *professing Christians* who have a view of salvation that disconnects it from real life, and that nullifies the warnings of the Bible and puts the sinning person who claims to be a Christian beyond the reach of Biblical threats. And this doctrine is comforting thousands on the way to hell. Jesus said, if you don't fight lust, you won't go to heaven. The stakes are much higher than whether the world is blown up by a thousand bombs. If you don't fight lust, you won't go to heaven (1Pe 2:11-note; Col 3:6-note; Gal 5:21-note; 1Co 6:10; Heb 12:14-note) Are we not then saved by faith -- by believing in Jesus Christ? We are indeed! Those who persevere in Faith shall be saved (Mt 24:13; 10:22; 1Co 15:2-note; Col 1:23-note).

How do you lay hold on eternal life? Paul gives the answer in 1Ti 6:12 -- "Fight the good fight of faith: lay hold on eternal life. the fight against lust is a battle against unbelief. And the fight for sexual purity is the fight of faith.

The great error that I am trying to explode in these messages is the error that says, faith in God is one thing and the fight for holiness is another thing. Faith gets you to heaven and holiness gets you rewards.

You get your justification by faith, and you get your sanctification by works. You start the Christian life in the power of the Spirit, you press on in the efforts of the flesh. This is the great evangelical error of our day. (Ed: 1988!) The battle for obedience is optional, they say, because only faith is necessary for salvation (Ed: See **Obedience of faith** and **Relationship of faith and obedience**). Our response: the battle for obedience is absolutely necessary for salvation because it **IS** the fight of faith. The battle against lust is absolutely necessary for salvation because it is the battle against unbelief. Faith alone delivers from hell and the faith that delivers from hell delivers from lust. I hope you can see that this is a greater gospel than the other one. It's the gospel of God's victory over sin, not just his tolerance of sin. It is the gospel of Romans 6:14 (note): "Sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace." Almighty grace! Sovereign grace! (Read the entire message [Battling the Unbelief of Lust](#))

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.

Will judge ([2919](#))(**krino**) primarily signifies to distinguish, separate or discriminate; then, to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong, without necessarily passing an adverse sentence, though this is usually involved.

Krino - 114x in 98v - act as... judge(1), concluded(1), condemn(1), condemning(1), considered(1), decided(8), determine(1), determined(2), go to law(1), goes to law(1), judge(42), judged(25), judges(10), judging(5), judgment(1), pass judgment(1), passes judgment(1), passing judgment(1), pronounced(1), regards(2), stand trial(2), sue(1), trial(3), tried(1), try(1). Mt 5:40; 7:1 2; 19:28; Lk 6:37; 7:43; 12:57; 19:22; 22:30; Jn 3:17 18; 5:22, 30; 7:24, 51; 8:15 16, 26, 50; 12:47 48; 16:11; 18:31; Acts 3:13; 4:19; 7:7; 13:27, 46; 15:19; 16:4, 15; 17:31; 20:16; 21:25; 23:3, 6; 24:21; 25:9 10, 20, 25; 26:6, 8; 27:1; Ro 2:1, 3, 12, 16, 27; 3:4, 6 7; 14:3 4 5, 10, 13, 22; 1Co 2:2; 4:5; 5:3, 12 13; 6:1 2 3, 6; 7:37; 10:15, 29; 11:13, 31 32; 2Co 2:1; 5:14; Col 2:16; 2Th 2:12; 2Ti 4:1; Titus 3:12; Heb 10:30; 13:4; Jas 2:12; 4:11 12; 5:9; 1Pe 1:17; 2:23; 4:5 6; Rev 6:10; 11:18; 16:5; 18:8, 20; 19:2, 11; 20:12 13

W E Vine speaks of the judgment of God regarding sexual sins noting that...God has appointed retributive effects of these evils in this life. The certainty of divine judgment hereafter is declared in Rev 21:8-[note](#); Rev 22:15-[note](#). Cp. 1Th 4:6-note.

Spurgeon writes...And terrible will be their doom when God does judge them. They may think that, because they sin in secret, therefore they shall escape punishment; but it shall not be so. Whether men judge them or not, God will judge them.

As **Ray Stedman** reminds us...

Nonconformity to the world must certainly involve these areas. The loose sexual standards of our generation and the intense materialistic spirit of this age constitute a constant peril to our hearts, and we must beware of them. We must realize that God has undertaken to sustain the sacredness of marriage and that He unceasingly, unrelentingly judges violations of it. Therefore, we dare not heed the fine sounding declarations being made today about a "new morality," as though we had passed beyond the ancient standards and they no longer had significance.

As this writer reminds us, God judges the immoral and adulterous. He does not mean that God looses lightning bolts from heaven against them, or that he causes terrible diseases to come upon them; these are not the forms of judgment. But we can see the judgment of God in the terrible tempest of mental pressures and crackups which sweep like a plague across this land. They are due to the breakdown of moral standards. The certain deterioration of life is the judgment of God when sex standards are violated. It is the brutalization of humanity, so men become like animals and live on the level of animals. This is so apparent in our day. ([Hebrews 13:1-6: THE INTENDED LIFE](#))

Those who have taken up adulterous lifestyles (emphasis on *lifestyle*) and remain unrepentant (exhibit no repentance and no evidence of repentance > cp Mt 3:8, 4:17, 11:20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 12:41, Mk 1:15, 6:12, Lk 3:3, 8, 5:32, rich man in Sheol = Lk 16:29, 30, 31, Lk 24:47, Acts 3:19, 11:18, 13:24, 17:30, 19:4, Acts 20:21 Acts 26:20 Ro 2:4-note **Study especially 2Cor 7:9 and 2Cor 7:10.** 2Cor 12:21 2Pet 3:9-note Re 2:21, 22-note, Re 9:20-note, "of their immorality" = Re 9:21-note, Rev 16:9-note, Re 16:11-note) will suffer the ultimate judgment of God with eternal separation from God. Despite their insistence that they are "Christians," they are self-deceived (See 1Co 6:9, 10, 1Co 15:33, Gal 6:7-note, Ep 5:5, 6-note, Ep 5:7-note, Titus 3:3, 1Jn 3:7, Mt 7:21-note, Mt 7:22, 23-note). God's Word is clear that all who live a life (habitually) of adultery or fornication and are unrepentant are under God's wrath and ultimate judgment regardless of what they assert about their salvation experience.

God's judgment on sexual immorality in marriage is not just future but is also seen in the present. Physical disease is an ever present threat (herpes, Chlamydia, AIDS). In addition there is mental anguish with guilt, self-hatred and ego disintegration. Couples become alienated, estranged, hateful and occasionally even commit murder. And then there is the toll on society with the problem of a plethora of illegitimate children without fathers and the plight of abortion. Unrepentant adultery and sexual immorality will not go unpunished as all these various aspects of present judgment attest. In addition a terrible judgment awaits for all unrepentant sinners will stand before God, who is a "consuming fire" (cf. Heb 12:29-note; Heb 10:27-note, Heb 10:31-note).

Kent Hughes writes that...I will never forget a young coed who came to my office, obviously shaken. She said she was a new Christian and that soon after her conversion she started attending a church youth group. The president of the group asked her for a date, and she was flattered and thrilled to be going out with a Christian. "How different it will be from what I'm used to," she thought. But before the night was over, he had destroyed her purity, shattered her faith, and ruined his own testimony. The last I heard from the girl her life was still a shambles.

Within marriage, sex is beautiful, fulfilling, creative but outside of marriage, sex is evil, ugly (contrary to the "Hollywood commentaries"), destructive, and damning.

The pithy nineteenth century bishop **J C Ryle** wrote that "The violation of the seventh commandment is the sin above all others, that, as Hosea says, "takes away the understanding" (Ho 4:11). It is the sin that leaves deeper scars upon the soul than any other sin that a man can commit. It is a sin that destroys thousands of young men in every age, and has even overthrown a few of the saints of God in the past. Samson and David are fearful proofs. It is the sin that man dares to smile at, and smooths over using the terms:thrills, love, uncontrollable passions, and natural desires. But it is the sin that the devil rejoices over, for he is the "unclean spirit;" and it is the sin that God abhors, and declares He "will judge" (Heb 13:4). Young men, "Flee from sexual immorality" (1Co 6:18) if you love life. "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient" (Ep 5:6-note). Flee from the opportunity of it--from the company of those who might draw you into it--from the places where you might be tempted to do it. Read what our Lord says about it in (Mt 5:28-note). Be like the holy servant Job: (Job 31:1). Flee from talking about it. It is one of the things that ought not even be hinted about in conversation. You cannot even touch black grease without getting your hands dirty. Flee from the thoughts of it; resist them, destroy them, pray against them--make any sacrifice rather than give way to them. Imagination is the hotbed where this sin is too often hatched. Guard your thoughts (cp Pr 4:23-note), and there will be little fear about your actions.

Spurgeon - Old Hugh Latimer preached before Henry VIII. It was the custom of the court preacher to present the king with something on his birthday, and Latimer presented Henry VIII with a pocket handkerchief with this text in the corner: "God will judge sexually immoral people and adulterers" (Heb 13:4)—a very suitable text for bluff Harry. And then he preached a sermon before his most gracious majesty against sins of lust, and he delivered himself with tremendous force, not forgetting or abridging the personal application. And the king said that next time Latimer preached—the next Sunday—he should apologize, and he would make him so mold his sermon as to eat his own words. Latimer thanked the king for letting him off so easily. When the next Sunday came, he stood up in the pulpit and said: "Hugh Latimer, you are this day to preach before the high and mighty prince Henry, King of Great Britain and France. If you say one single word that displeases his Majesty he will take your head off; therefore, mind what you are doing." But then he said, "Hugh Latimer, you are this day to preach before the Lord God Almighty, who is able to cast both body and soul into hell, and so tell the king the truth outright." And so he did. His performance was equal to his resolution. However, the king did not take off his head; he respected him all the more. The fear of the Lord gave him strong confidence, as it will any who cleave close to their colors. Drive right straight ahead in the fear of the everlasting God, and whoever comes in your way had better mind what he is doing. It is yours to do what is right, and bear everything they devise that is wrong. God will bless you in it, and therefore you shall praise Him.

Hebrews 13:4

The Right and Wrong Place for Sex

Pastor Steven Cole (all of his messages are highly recommended - has the following excellent message on...

Perhaps you're wondering why I would spend an entire message on a single verse that is fairly easy to understand, a verse that most churchgoers would agree with. Let me explain.

Over the past 40 years, our culture has taken a U-turn away from the Christian view of marriage and sexual morality that was prevalent before that time. While divorce and sexual immorality are not new, they used to be frowned upon and marital faithfulness was viewed as desirable. But beginning in the 1960's, our culture threw off Christian standards and openly embraced "free" sex and easy divorce. Openness toward homosexuality began to make in-roads, so that now it is widely promoted as a way of life that should not only not be condemned, but be accepted as normal.

It would be naïve to think that the church is insulated from these powerful cultural trends. Frances Schaeffer observed,

People drift along from generation to generation, and the morally unthinkable becomes thinkable as the years move on (cited by Erwin Lutzer, *The Truth About Same-Sex Marriage* [Moody Press], p. 57).

It is a commonly known fact that the divorce rate among evangelical Christians is no different than that of our culture at large.

Also, evangelicals are not doing well in the area of sexual purity. Leadership ([Winter, 1988], pp. 12-13, 24), a journal for pastors, commissioned a poll to determine how common is pastoral indiscretion. They found that since entering local church ministry, 23 percent of pastors had done something with someone other than their spouse that they considered sexually inappropriate. Twelve percent admitted to having extra-marital intercourse. Among those who were not pastors, the figures doubled! Also, 20 percent of pastors admitted to looking at sexually oriented media at least once a month, and that was before the internet! I assume that the numbers have not gotten better in the ensuing years.

Because of the importance of godly marriages as the foundation of our church and society, our text is extremely important.

The connection with the preceding context is that **love of the brethren** (Heb 13:1-note) must start in the home, between Christian couples. To practice biblical love, husbands and wives must guard themselves against sexual infidelity. To restrict sex to marriage was a novel idea to many in the first century. Men often had mistresses or could go to temple prostitutes. To call people to lifelong fidelity to a single spouse was radically counter-cultural. It has become so again in our culture. We have an opportunity, through moral purity and godly marriages, to shine in the darkness around us for Jesus Christ (cp Mt 5:16-note, Phil 2:15-note).

We can sum up our text:

Since God ordained marriage and sex within marriage, He will judge those who practice sex outside of marriage.

Before we look at the verse, note that Satan tries to get us to go to extremes on one side or the other. If he can't get us to move towards sexual promiscuity, he tempts us with asceticism. [Asceticism](#) is the idea that you attain godliness by denying yourself certain things that are not prohibited in Scripture, whether food, certain comforts, or sexual pleasure in marriage. The apostle Paul strongly condemns asceticism in Colossians 2:16-note, Col 2:17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 (see notes Col 2:17; 18; 19; 20; 21; 22) where he concludes (Col 2:23-note)

These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

In 1 Timothy 4:3, he warns against

men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

So we need the balance of Scripture to avoid extremes.

1. Marriage, including the sexual relationship in marriage, is to be held in honor among all.

The word **honor** means precious or valuable. Paul uses it of "**precious** stones" (1Co 3:12). Peter uses the word to describe the "**precious** blood" of Christ (1Pe 1:19-note) and God's "**precious** and magnificent promises" (2Pe 1:4-note). **Marriage bed** is a euphemism for sex in marriage.

A. We should honor marriage because God ordained it at creation.

Marriage is honorable or precious because God instituted it in the Garden, before sin entered this world. Before that, He concluded that it was not good for man to be alone (Ge 2:18), and so He created Eve for Adam (Ge 2:21, 22, 23). Since marriage comes from God and was begun with the first man and woman, it should be held in honor among all. (Ge 2:24)

Note further:

(1) All three persons of the Trinity honor marriage.

God the Father honored marriage by instituting it in the Garden. God the Son honored marriage by performing His first miracle at the wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11). He also confronted the loose divorce practices that had evolved in Jewish society and reaffirmed God's original intent in marriage (Mt 19:1-9). God the Holy Spirit honored marriage by inspiring the apostle Paul to write that marriage is an earthly picture of Christ and His church (Eph 5:25-33 -note; see also Rev 21:9-note).

(2) Honorable marriage as ordained by God is a covenant between a man and a woman for life.

God created one woman for Adam, not many women and not a man! While God tolerated polygamy in the Old Testament, you can-not find a single example of a harmonious polygamous marriage. It always created problems. Also, while God tolerates divorce under certain conditions, it always reflects the hardness of the human heart (Mt 19:8) and God states plainly that He hates it (Mal 2:16). As for the idea of homosexual "marriage," there is no biblical basis for it, in spite of the attempts of some to justify it. Homosexuality is uniformly condemned in the Bible as sin (Lev 18:22; Ro 1:26-note; Ro 1:27-note; 1Co 6:9; 1Ti 1:10).

It is important to affirm that biblical marriage is a lifelong covenant relationship (Mal. 2:14). The sexual union is to be restricted within the bounds of that covenant relationship. To engage in sex outside of marriage is sin.

I want to mention several ways that we dishonor marriage and then some ways that we can honor marriage.

B. We dishonor marriage...

(1) By viewing celibacy as more spiritual.

Paul makes it clear that celibacy is a special gift from God that enables a person to remain single and control sexual desires so that he or she has more time to be devoted to the Lord. But he readily acknowledges that not all have this gift (1Co 7:1, 2, 8, 9, 32, 33, 34, 35). As we've already seen, he specifically condemns those who forbid marriage (1Ti 4:3).

But in spite of Paul's warning against those who forbid marriage, the early church developed the view that it is more spiritual to be celibate. Origen, an early church father, had himself castrated so that he could be free of sexual temptation. Augustine, who had a concubine and a son with her, thought that he had to give her up and devote himself to celibacy to follow Christ. I think it's sad that he did not marry her. He viewed sex in marriage as a necessary evil to procreate children, but not as God's gift to be enjoyed. The Roman Catholic requirement that priests be celibate furthers the view that celibacy is more spiritual. Martin Luther broke with that unbiblical view when he married a former nun and extolled the blessings of marital love.

(2) By saying that homosexual "marriage" is valid.

I've already commented on this, but let me add that we do not hate homosexuals by proclaiming God's holy standards. Sin of any kind always damages those who engage in it. If I saw someone blindly running toward a cliff, the loving thing to do is to yell, "Stop!" We do not love people if we do not warn about the dangers of all sexual sin. Paul wrote (1Co 6:18),

"Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body."

We dishonor God's institution of marriage and we do not practice biblical love if we do not proclaim His standards of sexual purity.

(3) By following our culture's no-fault divorce practices.

I realize that many Christians have been divorced, and that if you could, you would turn back the clock and do many things differently. I do not want to add to your grief and pain. But I must set the biblical standard back where it belongs. As God's people, we must reverse the trend of the past 40 years. People should be able to

look at Christian marriages and marvel that we have stayed together and worked through difficulties because of the covenant that we entered into before God. (see **Covenant: As It Relates to Marriage**)

(4) By marrying an unbeliever.

Many Christians do not even consider it a sin to marry an unbeliever, and yet God calls it an abomination (Malachi 2:11). Paul makes it clear that we are not to be bound together with unbelievers and that we are only free to marry in the Lord (2Co 6:14; 1Co 7:39). Since marriage is to be a picture of Christ and the church, it destroys that picture to enter into marriage with an unbeliever.

I've had professing Christian young women tell me that they've prayed about marrying an unbeliever, and "feel a peace" about doing so. But it is never peace from God, because He does not give His peace when we sin. You and your children will suffer the consequences if you enter into such a marriage.

If you are already married to an unbeliever, Paul instructs you to remain in that marriage, if possible (1Co 7:12, 13, 14, 15, 16). Perhaps God will be gracious in converting your mate. But stories of how God worked to convert an unbelieving mate never justify sinning by entering such a mixed marriage in the first place (Ro 6:1, 2).

(5) By having sexual relations outside of the marriage covenant.

This is the main point of our text. Note that the two parts of the second half of the verse correspond to the two parts of the first half of the verse.

"Fornicators" (single people who have sex) dishonor the institution of marriage.

"Adulterers" (married people who have sex with someone other than their spouse) defile the marriage bed. (For some strange reason, the NIV reverses the commands at the end of the verse and adds the word "all" before "sexually immoral." This confuses the symmetrical structure of the verse.) The Greek text omits the verb, which must be supplied from the context. Some versions take it as indicative ("Marriage is honorable..."). But in light of the commands in the context, it should probably be understood as exhortation, as in the NASB.

We've seen that we should honor marriage because God ordained it at creation. We dishonor marriage by saying that celibacy is more spiritual; by saying that homosexual "marriage" is valid; by following our culture's no-fault divorce practices; by marrying an unbeliever; and, by having sexual relations outside of marriage.

C. We honor marriage:

Here, we could go through the same list as in the previous point and state the opposite. We honor and affirm marriage by viewing it as just as spiritually fulfilling as celibacy, depending on one's spiritual gift. We honor it by holding firmly to heterosexual marriage as God's only option. We honor it by staying committed to our mate and working through difficulties, rather than bailing out. We honor marriage by entering into it only with a committed believer, so that we can raise our children in the Lord. And, we honor marriage by abstaining from sexual immorality. But I want to focus on two things:

(1) By guarding ourselves from sexual sin.

No Christian deliberately jumps into sexual sin, but as Leadership (ibid., p. 12) reported (in 1988), among subscribers of Christianity Today magazine who are not pastors, "45 percent indicated having done something they considered sexually inappropriate, 23 percent said they had had extramarital intercourse, and 28 percent said they had engaged in other forms of extramarital sexual contact." Clearly, this is a major area where Satan hits believers! It is not enough to sit here and agree with God's standards for sexual purity. We must have a strategy to guard ourselves from falling (cp 1Pe 2:11-note).

The major element in this strategy is to maintain a close daily walk with Christ and a close relationship with your mate. If we drift from the Lord and are not spending consistent time in the Word and prayer, we become vulnerable to temptation. If we grow distant from our mate, we are more open to temptation. In the Leadership survey, 78 percent of the pastors who failed morally said that the main factor was physical and emotional attraction. Forty-one per-cent listed marital dissatisfaction.

As I've repeatedly emphasized, all sin begins in the mind. This means that to guard ourselves from sexual sin, we must judge it and turn from it the moment it enters our minds. Jesus made this point graphically when He said (Matt. 5:27, 28-notes, Mt 5:29, 30-note):

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 lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye makes

you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

Jesus did not mean literally to maim yourself, but He did mean to underscore the serious nature of mental lust. If you do not cut it off, Jesus says that you're going to hell! To obey Jesus' words, you need to avoid watching TV programs, movies, or videos that tempt you to lust. Devise ways to block pornography from the internet. Be accountable to another brother in Christ.

Also, to guard yourself from sexual sin, memorize Scripture, which transforms your mind. Psalm 119:9^{[note](#)} Ps 119:11-^{[note](#)} states,

"How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word.... Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You."

Another piece of the strategy is to put a fence around your marriage. If you go to the Grand Canyon and don't want to fall over the edge, either stay behind the railing or don't go near an edge where there is no railing. Putting a fence around your marriage means that you do not enter into a close friendship with a member of the opposite sex. These relationships often start innocently enough. "We are able to talk as brother and sister." Beware! If you find yourself as a married person attracted to a member of the opposite sex, cut off any contact and avoid any situation that could lead to temptation. Don't go near the edge!

Let me add one other way to honor marriage that is implied by our text:

(2) By enjoying the totality of the marriage relationship, including the physical relationship.

"Marriage bed" refers to sex in marriage, and it is not dirty.

D. H. Field writes (The New Dictionary of Theology [IVP], ed. by Sinclair Ferguson, David Wright, and J. I. Packer, p. 638),

"The history of the church betrays a far less positive attitude to sexuality than the Bible's."

He goes on to talk about the early influence of ascetic idealism. Then he says,

"With very few exceptions, patristic and medieval writers condemned the sensual pleasure of intercourse as sinful. Their attitude to marriage, too, was at best ambivalent."

But the Bible affirms the pleasure of the sexual relationship in marriage, both for men and women. Solomon instructs his son to let his wife's breasts satisfy him at all times, and to be exhilarated with her love (Pr 5:19). The Song of Solomon extols the joys of sex in marriage for both partners. Paul tells both husbands and wives that they do not have authority over their own bodies, but their spouse does, and that they have a responsibility to meet the sexual needs of their mate as a preventative to immorality (1Co 7:2, 3, 4, 5). Sarah refers to sexual relations with her husband as having pleasure with him (Ge 18:12).

Sex in marriage is directly related to the interpersonal relationship. God designed it that way. There must be mutual sensitivity, caring, and respect in the relationship between husband and wife as the foundation for the enjoyment of the sexual aspect. But I am emphasizing what Paul states, that it is a God-given preventative against sexual sin (1Co 7:2).

I once counseled a couple where the husband had fallen into adultery. He and his wife had not had sexual relations in over ten years and she assumed that everything was just fine! He was really angry about this, but he hadn't said anything. When a neighbor woman became friendly, he fell. Sadly, the couple eventually divorced. It all could have been avoided if they had followed the clear teaching of Scripture:

"Stop depriving one another" (1Co 7:5)

Our text issues a strong warning:

2. God will judge those who practice sexual immorality. Many Scriptures hammer home this warning:

1Cor 6:9, 10: Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

Eph. 5:5, 6-note: For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for

because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

Rev 21:8-note: But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Many other Scriptures give the same warning (Mt 5:27, 28, 29, 30-see notes; Gal. 5:19, 20, 21-notes; Col. 3:5-note; 1Th 4:4-note, 1Th 4:6, 7-note; Re 22:15-note). While believers do not need to fear God's eternal judgment, Scripture is clear that if you habitually practice sexual immorality, you **may not be a genuine Christian** (1John 3:7, 8, 9, 10 - note that the verbs for "practice" and "sin" are present tense = habitual action). If you are a genuine Christian, God will discipline you severely if you engage in sexual sin (Heb 12:5-note, Heb 12:6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Heb 12:11-note).

While He forgives us when we repent, He does not necessarily remove the consequences of our sin (see the life of David, 2Sa 12:10, 11, 12, 13, 14). He may forgive your sin, but you contracted a sexual disease that could be untreatable or fatal.

Some will protest, "But we're under grace!" But the book that was written to explain God's grace also warns (Gal 6:7-note, Gal 6:8-note),

"Do not be deceived (present imperative + a negative = stop an action already in process), God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

But I want to end with this good news:

3. God will forgive those who repent of their sin and trust in the blood of Christ.

Immediately following Paul's warning against God's judgment on sexual immorality, he adds these wonderful words,

"And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (1Co 6:11).

Neither homosexuality, adultery, nor any kind of sexual perversion are beyond God's forgiveness. First John 1:9 graciously promises,

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Paul calls himself the chief of sinners, and yet he found mercy at the cross (1Ti 1:15, 16). You can experience God's forgiveness and gift of eternal life if you will turn from your sin and trust in Jesus Christ.

Conclusion - The late comedian, George Burns, used to say that he could remember the time when the air was clean and sex was dirty. Biblically speaking, sex has never been dirty in the context that God ordained for it: in lifelong covenant marriage between a man and a woman. That's the right place for sex. The wrong place is outside of such covenant marriage, where it incurs God's judgment.

If God's Word is true, our culture is in moral darkness. But when the darkness is greatest, the light shines the brightest. If we will maintain God's standards of moral purity, He will use us to shine in this dark world with the good news of God's forgiveness and with the news that sex is clean in God-ordained marriages.

Discussion Questions:

How can we demonstrate God's love for homosexuals and yet His wrath against their sin? Do you start with love or wrath?

What are some other ways (than those in the message) that Christians can plan not to fall into sexual sin?

Can a true believer be "addicted" (enslaved is the biblical word) to sexual sin? (Mt 5:27, 28, 29, 30-note; Ro 6:17, 18-note; 1John 3:7, 8, 9, 10.)

How would you counsel a single person who wants to be married, but cannot find a suitable mate? [Hebrews 13:4 The Right and Wrong Place for Sex](#)