

**Honoring Marriage**  
**6-22-25**  
**Mark McCartin**

**Heb 13:4** *Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.*

**Honoring The Marriage Covenant:**

**Honoring Marriage - Others and Your Own:**

**Love and Lust – Timothy Keller**

<https://youtu.be/Qai6gbYGq5Q>

Matthew 5:27-30.

1. Common first reaction: “Christianity condemns all sexual desire.”
2. Preacher’s thesis: Biblical view of sex is radically different from culture—yet profoundly attractive.

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**II. The Integrity of Sex**

A. **Biblical ethic in a single phrase:** “Sex only inside a covenant.”

B. Defining *covenant* vs. consumer relationships

1. Consumer: “You adjust to me or I’m gone.”  
Covenant: “I adjust to you because the relationship outranks my needs.”
2. Why mutual covenant matters
  - a. Creates a **zone of safety**—no marketing or performance masks.
  - b. Generates **richer feelings** that grow when commitment precedes emotion (analogy: parent–child).
  - c. Produces **freedom** (Kierkegaard): promises liberate us from slavery to feelings.
3. Sex as **covenant good / sacrament**
  - d. Physical nakedness symbolizes whole-life self-gift.

- e. Sex outside marriage lacks integrity—“asking bodies to say what lives have withheld” (C. S. Lewis).
4. Consequences of breaking covenant design
- f. Damages sex’s “commitment-apparatus” (John White).
  - g. Empirical evidence: cohabitation & consumer habits raise divorce risk (NY Times article).

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**III. The Challenge of Lust**

- A. Jesus deepens the command: lustful looking = heart-level adultery.
- B. Key term denotes **idolatrous greed**, not mere attraction.
- C. Parallels with monetary greed
1. Self-seeking, addictive, fantasy-driven, God-replacing.
- D. Four contemporary forms of sexual idolatry
2. Pornography & masturbation—sex as frictionless self-consumption.
  3. All sex outside marriage—consumer leverage to “keep the relationship.”
  4. Cultural myth: “I can’t be whole or happy without sex.”
  5. Romantic fair-tale idolatry—perfect spouse/home/kids as ultimate fulfillment.
- E. Jesus’ drastic imagery (gouge eye, cut hand)
6. Hyperbole urging radical measures to escape addiction.
  7. Modern data: pornography warps expectations, weakens marriage prospects, pressures women.

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**IV. The Future of Love**

- A. **Gehenna** image—hell as unfulfilled, unquenchable longing.
- Sex outside covenant foreshadows this emptiness: “water, water everywhere ...”
  - Sex inside covenant points forward—foretaste of eternal union with Christ.
- C. Jesus & the Samaritan woman (John 4)
- Living-water promise exposes her serial search for fulfillment in men.
- D. Ultimate cure: Christ as **“spouse of the soul.”**
- A marriage (or singleness) thrives only when His love is primary.
  - Without that, even covenant marriage collapses into consumer demands.
  - Drink deeply of Christ’s spousal love; only then will our sexuality point others to Him.