

## Matthew - Commentaries by Nicolas Simon

That It May Be Well With Thee: Dating And Marriage, Destructive Behaviors (5:28)

The Greek word for harlot is porne. When combined with grapho, the word for writing, we arrive at the English word pornography. The Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount said: "whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:28). In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were both naked, but when sin entered and their eyes were opened, that which had been beautiful and perfect in God's sight became a source of lust. God provided clothing for Adam and Eve, not because they were cold, but to cover them.

We live in a day when pornography is accessible at the touch of a button. In the past, the effort and embarrassment of getting such material deterred most young men from obtaining it. Pornography, as with any other vice, is highly addictive. It brings about a physiological response that is not unlike the effect of a drug. Unfortunately, a generation of boys has now been affected by this addiction. Aside from its obvious sinful nature, it is also highly destructive. When a man looks upon his wife, there is a connection that goes far beyond the physical; there is a strong emotional tie which binds the two. When pornography is viewed, a woman is reduced to a mere object of sexuality and perversion. A woman, who makes herself the subject of pornography, devalues herself; it destroys her self-esteem. Instead of seeing herself as God views her, and recognizing the value that He has placed upon her, the measure of her worth is determined by the leering eyes of corrupt men.

Ladies, if you are dating a man who has a problem with pornography — and sadly, Christian men have been caught up in this epidemic — beware. It would be wise and appropriate to break off the relationship until the matter has been thoroughly judged. The addiction will not cease with marriage, and you will, in effect, be within an adulterous relationship. Furthermore, the things that he has seen — and which he erroneously believes you will enjoy — will prove to be utterly degrading.

We live in a world of fantasy. Experiences that could only, at one time, be read about, or more recently, witnessed in a movie, can now be experienced virtually through modern technology. As with the subject just considered, these things appeal to the flesh. Just because we are not actually doing something, doesn't make it right or acceptable. "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:32). To derive pleasure from killing someone, even if it is virtual, is both defiling and sinful.

Addictions result from the rush that the activity brings; for a moment it makes one feel good. It takes you out of your present reality and all its struggles — it is a form of escapism. There is pleasure in sin for a time (Heb. 11:25). As man distances himself from God, the need for such diversions grows and Satan is more than happy to provide them. Any addiction, whether it be drugs or alcohol, pornography, or corrupt video games, will be destructive to the marriage relationship.

Many of these things seem to plague men, but they are not limited to them. A girl who has lived on a diet of foolish romance novels will have a distorted view of true romantic love. These books are just another form of fantasy. As with any addiction, when the effect wears off, the dosage must be increased. Erotic literature is now being received as main-stream and is especially popular among women.

That It May Be Well With Thee: Dating And Marriage, Divorce (19:6-9)

To write about divorce in a book on marriage is unfortunate but necessary. So far we have considered the Scriptural basis for marriage and something of the blessing that God has intended for mankind. It is just as important to recognize that a Biblical marriage is a lifetime commitment. Before entering into marriage, we need to hear what God has to say about breaking that tie.

We find our Lord addressing the subject of divorce four times in three separate gospels — Matthew, Mark, and Luke. If something is repeated four times, it should get our attention. The Gospel of Matthew gives us the most thorough treatment on the subject. Quoting in part: "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto Him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:6-9).

Despite a provision for divorce under the Mosaic Law, this was not God's plan from the beginning. Excepting the case of fornication on the part of an unfaithful spouse, there is no scriptural ground for divorce<sup>1</sup>. On hearing this, the disciples were incredulous: "If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry" (Matt. 19:10). It would seem that the people of that day had a rather liberal view of divorce — not unlike the present day. The Lord does not rebuke His disciples but simply points out that not every man is capable of living a celibate life. That is to say, if you can't accept a lifetime commitment, then don't marry; but for most, this will not be possible.

If a couple pursues divorce contrary to the Word of God, it puts them both in an awkward position. Neither is free to remarry, no matter the one who initiated the separation. Should they do so, they commit adultery. They have created a situation for themselves which they cannot undo. There may be a partial restoration, and there may yet be blessing, but their circumstance remains.

Marriage is literally till death do us part. The death of the wife or husband sets at liberty the surviving spouse; he or she may remarry. "If, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" (Rom. 7:3). Likewise, marriage does not extend beyond death: "In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven" (Matt. 22:30).

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