

Leviticus 18:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her.

Analysis

Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her.

This verse falls within the section on **Unlawful Sexual Relations**. Prohibitions against various sexual sins, distinguishing Israel from Canaanite practices and protecting family sanctity.

The holiness demanded in Leviticus becomes possible through Christ, who both satisfies God's righteous requirements and transforms believers by His Spirit.

Historical Context

Prohibitions against various sexual sins, distinguishing Israel from Canaanite practices and protecting family sanctity. Chapters 17-27, often called the 'Holiness Code,' expand covenant obligations beyond ritual to encompass all of life—sexuality, economics, justice, and relationships. The repeated refrain 'I am the LORD' grounds these laws in God's character and covenant relationship with Israel. Israel received these laws while encamped at Sinai, before entering Canaan. The laws prepared them for life in the promised land, distinguishing them from Canaanite practices and establishing their identity as God's holy nation. The portable tabernacle, central to Levitical worship, accompanied them through wilderness wanderings and eventually found permanent form in Solomon's temple.

Ancient texts like the Code of Hammurabi show that law codes were common in the ancient Near East, but biblical law uniquely grounded ethics in God's character rather than merely social convention.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does this verse point to Christ, and how does that deepen your faith and gratitude?
2. In what ways does this verse challenge contemporary cultural values or your personal attitudes?
3. How can you use this verse to worship God more fully, obey Him more faithfully, or love others more sacrificially?

Interlinear Text

אֵל	אֲשֶׁת	עִמְיכֶם	לֹא	תַּתִּיר	שְׁכַבְתָּם
H413	wife	with thy neighbour's	H3808	Moreover thou shalt not	lie
H802		H5997		H5414	H7903
בָּהּ	לְטַמֵּאָה	לִזְרָעָה			
carnally	to defile		H0		
H2233		H2930			

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 20:14 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Leviticus 20:10 (Parallel theme): And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

Hebrews 13:4 (Parallel theme): Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

1 Corinthians 6:9 (Parallel theme): Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

Deuteronomy 5:18 (Parallel theme): Neither shalt thou commit adultery.