

THE BEREAN

"...EXAMINING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY..." (Acts 17:11)

SPIRITUAL ADULTERY

*A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES
PART FORTY THREE OF SIXTY FOUR*

There are two rivals for the love and allegiance of the human heart, God and the world. Many passages exhort us to give God our affection. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15). "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (Matthew 6:24). When Christians choose to be a friend to the world, they become enemies to God. James likens this situation to adultery. "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (James 4:4). Despite this warning, too many of God's people are "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (II Timothy 3:4).

No description of worldliness can impress its heinousness on our minds more vividly than comparing it to adultery. The breaking of one's marriage vows by bestowing affections on another is a grievous sin against self, spouse, and God. When a Christian departs from the living God he commits spiritual adultery. His unfaithfulness in his affections is a sin against self and Christ.

The disloyalty of Israel to God is often called adultery in the Old Testament. The book of Hosea describes the wantonness of the prophet's wife. The unfaithfulness to Hosea and the pain he felt picture the unfaithfulness of Israel to God and the pain He felt. "In the same sense, worldly-minded Christians are adulteresses" (Tasker). We are unfaithful to God when we become friends to the world. To love the world is to become indifferent or openly hostile to God. God remains faithful, but the power of earthly things draws the disciple away into adultery.

It is the deliberate choice by the Christian for worldly conduct that makes him God's enemy "because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God" (Romans 8:7). Adultery against our mate and against our God will be punished by God. "They who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:21). "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you" (II Corinthians 6:17).

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