



Global College of Ministry

**EXPLORE**

The Christian & Relationships

## From Pentecost to Problems

“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring”  
(Acts 6:1).

### *Prayer*

**T**he church started as a result of a ten day prayer meeting where people were waiting for the power from on high. This power would transform their lives and they would never be the same.

### *Pentecost*

Once Pentecost happened, people were added to the church daily. A great revival was in progress. Pentecost produced people coming into the church.

### *People*

One would think everything was perfect with this group of people who were in one accord; they prayed; fasted; sold their possessions, and had all things in common. Miracles, signs, and wonders were operating in the church. Thousands of people were coming into the church. The people brought....

### *Problems*

Acts 6 opens with revival and church growth happenings but with people problems.

A good pastor needs to understand people. Many people coming to our churches have problems. David's group in 1 Samuel 22:1-2 were definitely problem people. You will have some of these same types of people in your church. People will walk into your church hoping you have the answer to their problems. You can transform them into mighty men and women through the help of the Lord. In 2 Samuel 23:8-39 there were 37 of the 400 who were transformed into David's mighty men.

John Drakeford said, “By people we are broken, and by people we are put together again!” People will hurt and also bless you. The church would not be without people. People do not arrive perfect. The five-fold ministry is designed to make and bring them to perfection (Ephesians 4:11-12).

It is often said, “People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.” We must show the world we care.

A tribe in East Africa exchange greetings by asking, “Are you well?” The response is, “I am well if you are.”

Kwame Gyekye in his book, *African Cultural Values: An Introduction* suggests, "In African societies human relations are highly valued. Greeting people one meets is an important element in enhancing human relations and in making people feel good about themselves. The greeting is considered a way of acknowledging the other person as a fellow human being."

As pastors and church leaders it is important to study human nature. In Acts 6 the apostles gave the people the opportunity to choose for themselves deacons in the church.

People put forth their greatest efforts when they are carrying out their ideas. Give your people credit in coming up with solutions to church problems. Do not try to take all the credit. People have the tendency to reject decisions that are made for them even when these decisions are in their best interests.

Give your people a chance to voice their opinion and take ownership of the decisions made. Treat people the way you would like to be treated.

People can be divided into three groups:

1. Those who make things happen.
2. Those who watch things happen.
3. Those who wonder what happened.

We need to train our people to make things happen and be involved in the church.

When faced with the problem in Acts 6, leadership could have been:

1. Lazy (Does nothing about the problem).
2. Procrastinated (Put off the problem until later).
3. Distracted (Look at other situations and side issues).
4. Impatient (Be upset and quit).

**They solved the problem by using the people who were causing the problem.**

Bear Bryant, a famous football coach said, "If anything goes bad, I did it. If anything goes semi-good, then we did it. If anything goes real good, they did it." That attitude is what it takes to get people to be a team, and win.

The Apostles looked at the masses of converts as a result of prayer and Pentecost. They looked at people with problems, but part of the team, and told them to be involved in the decision. Peace prevailed and problems turned into....

### ***Progress***

"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied" (Acts 6:7).

**Study Questions**

1. What did prayer produce in Acts? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. What did Pentecost produce? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. What did people produce? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. What did problems produce? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. Of David's 400 men, how many became mighty men? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What did Drakeford say about people? \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. What is the purpose of five-fold ministry? \_\_\_\_\_  
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8. What is the purpose of greetings in African societies? \_\_\_\_\_  
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9. What should pastors and church leaders study in order to be more effective with people?  
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10. When do people put forth their best effort? \_\_\_\_\_  
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11. When people do not take part in the decision making what usually happens? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. What are three groups of people mentioned in this lesson? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. How did they go about solving the problem in Acts 6? \_\_\_\_\_

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14. What did Bear Bryant say? \_\_\_\_\_

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15. What could the Apostles have done instead of solving the problem? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Additional Notes

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## My Greatest Desire

“One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple”  
(Psalms 27:4, *NIV*).

**N**arrowed down to one thing, what do you value most? What is your single greatest desire?

David set the pace for all to follow. His passion was not merely to get something from God but to be with God. He wanted to know God and have a deep personal relationship with Him. There is a sharp difference between seeking the face of God and seeking His hand. David’s never-ceasing desire was to know God and be in His presence. This is an inseparable, intimate ingredient of being a Christian. Our relationship with God is the most central connection we will ever encounter in life. It is one of the vital indicators on our spiritual compass. Being in right relationship with the Way-Maker clarifies direction in every aspect of life. “Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track” (Proverbs 3:5-6, *MSG*).

Vance Havner tells of a little boy who had been begging his father for favors all day. The youngster ran once more into his Dad’s office. The weary father asked, “What do you want this time?” The surprising reply, “I don’t want anything. I just want to be with you.” How many times do we come to our heavenly Father with no specific needs but only to seek His presence and fellowship?

David went on to say: “You have said, Seek My face [inquire for and require My presence as your vital need]. My heart says to You, Your face (Your presence), Lord, will I seek, inquire for, and require [of necessity and on the authority of Your Word]” (Psalms 27:8, *AMP*).

No wonder David is called a man after God’s heart (1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22). His thinking and desire mirrored God’s ultimate aspiration for us. “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God” (John 17:3, *NKJV*).

In the New Testament, Paul is an excellent example of someone that longed for interaction with God, and desired to make that divine connection. “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death” (Philippians 3:10).

Paul wanted to be completely acquainted with God: His attributes, His work, and the salvation He provided. The highest desire in the mind of the Christian is to know Christ. Therefore, he

made a resolution. He had a deliberate purpose in mind. He gave his time and attention to knowing God. It was his chief pursuit. David, Paul and others echoed the ancients: "If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you" (Exodus 33:13, *NIV*).

The first and second commandment shows how much God values relationships. He expects us to love Him, and then to love others. "Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." So the scribe said to Him, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Mark 12:28-33, *NKJV*).

Jesus was questioned about the greatest commandment. He referred to the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4) knowing that it encapsulated the Jewish confession of faith. Jesus emphasized one's relationship with God. He taught that one should love God with his *whole* heart, his *whole* soul, his *whole* mind, and his *whole* strength. We should put everything into our relationship with God. But, He didn't stop there. He went on to reveal the twin duties of loving God and loving our neighbors. This was more important than all the laws, sacrifices, and offerings.

A quick overview of the Ten Commandments reveals they are all about relationships. The first four commandments deal with our relationship with God. The remaining six teach us about our relationships with others. Relationships are important to God. They identify who we are, what we value, what we do, and how we live.



Wade Martin aptly demonstrates the strongest point on the cross is where vertical and horizontal beams connect. The same can be said of our relationships. The point where our relationships are strongest is where our horizontal relationship with each other connects with our vertical relationship with God. When our relationship with God is weak or bad then relationships with others suffer. When our relationships with others are weak or bad, our relationship with God suffers.

With any relationship we have the choice to build and develop or to allow the relationship to deteriorate. It is up to us. God remains constant; always the same. In the famous Holman Hunt picture of Jesus standing at the door knocking, there is no handle on the outside (Revelation

3:20). The door can only be opened from inside. God has desired to have a relationship with man from the beginning. Adam and Eve closed the door. Jesus Christ became the door so that our fallen relationship and fellowship could be restored. Yet, the choice is still ours to let God into our lives. He will not force His way. His Word promises: “Come close to God, and God will come close to you” (James 4:8, *NLT*).

“A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24). We must be open to this divine friendship. God is there, willing to stick closer than a brother.

We see a pattern repeated throughout biblical history. People fall into sin, God judges and punishes their sin; and then beckons His people back to a relationship with Him. (See Genesis 3:8 – 19). We were created in the likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). As we live in correct relationship with God we are conformed to His likeness (Romans 8:29).

How does one build a relationship with God? Take a minute or two and brainstorm. He has created us as relational beings, so we already know the answer. It is premised on what it takes to build any relationship.

1. It begins with desire.
2. Communicate often. Be consistent. Spend time with Him in prayer and fasting. Talk to God. Be in friendship with Him. Be transparent and honest.
3. Learn to listen to His voice.
4. Read His Word. This reveals God in written form. It tells us all about God.
5. Study His attributes and ways.

A teacher was instructing a group of elementary children. He asked, “Does anyone here understand electricity?” One fretful little boy, thrust his hand in the air and exclaimed, “I understand electricity?” The teacher said, “Jimmy, would you explain electricity for the class?” The boy suddenly covered his face, “Last night I knew, but this morning I’ve forgotten.” The teacher responded, “This is tragic. The only person in history who ever understood electricity and this morning he forgot it.” At times we feel like that about our relationship and understanding of God. We envision Him off in the distance and impossible to understand. Yet, He is closer than the mention of His name and longs to be our dearest friend and companion.

A class of four-year-olds was drawing pictures of people from the Bible. A darling little girl worked intently on her portrait. The teacher asked, “What are you drawing?” “I’m drawing a picture of God,” she replied. “That’s a nice idea, but no one really knows what God looks like.” To that she responded, “Oh, they will, when I get done!”

We get a clear picture of what God is like through Jesus Christ. He was Emmanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23). As children, we often played a game called “Who am I?” One would give hints and others guessed who we were referring to. With Jesus Christ, there are no guessing games. He quickly and willingly reveals who He is and His Word unveils who we are in Him.

**Jesus Christ:**



### Who am I?

I am the Bread of Life	John 6:35
I am the Light of the World	John 8:12
I am the Gate and the Door	John 10:7
I am the Good Shepherd	John 10:14
I am the Resurrection and the Life	John 11:25
I am the Way and the Truth and the Life	John 14:6
I am the Vine	John 15:1

Once one has a deeper understanding of God and recognizes who He is, we will have a better comprehension of who we are in Christ. Look at who and what we become because of our relationship with Him.

### Who am I in Christ?

I am His child	John 1:12
I am His friend	John 15:15
I am part of His body	1 Corinthians 12:27
I am redeemed	Colossians 1:13-14; Revelation 5:9
I am a branch of Jesus Christ	John 15:5
I am His temple	1 Corinthians 3:16
I am a minister of reconciliation	2 Corinthians 5:17-21
I am His workmanship	Ephesians 2:10
I am a new creation	2 Corinthians 5:17
I am in Christ	Galatians 3:26, 28
I am joint heir with Christ	Romans 8:17
I am a saint	Ephesians 1:1
I am a citizen of heaven	Ephesians 2:19
I am chosen	John 15:16
I am hidden with Christ	Colossians 3:3
I am the salt of the earth	Matthew 5:13
I am the light of the world	Matthew 5:14
I am more than conqueror	Romans 8:37
I am a chosen generation	1 Peter 2:9
I am a royal priesthood	1 Peter 2:9
I am a holy nation	1 Peter 2:9
I am one of God's living stones	1 Peter 2:5
I am an alien and stranger to this world	1 Peter 2:11
I am saved by grace	Ephesians 2:8-9
I am part of the Bride of Christ	Revelation 19:7
I am a true worshipper	John 4:24

What a breathtaking privilege to know God in a personal way and to be identified as His friend. It's a relationship of highest value and seeing it grow is my greatest desire. It is joy to walk in step with Him. My path is blazed by God. He has me in the grip of His hand (Psalms 37:23-24). He directs me with His compass.

**Study Questions**

1. What was the pace David set for all to follow in their greatest desire? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What is the difference in seeking the face of God and seeking His hand? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Why and where (in the Bible) was David called "a man after God's heart?" \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Who, in the New Testament, is an excellent example of someone who longed for interaction with God, and desired to make that divine connection? Support your answer with Scripture reference. \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Write out (with reference) the two commandments that show how much God values relationships.

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2) \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What was Jesus' response to the question about the greatest commandment? Support your answer with Scripture reference. \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What relationship pattern is seen throughout biblical history? Give Scripture to support.

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8. List at least five (5) steps to building any relationship . . . especially one with God.

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- 2) \_\_\_\_\_

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- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

9. List seven (7) characteristics of Jesus that help us know who He is. Support with Scripture.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_

10. There are twenty-six (26) characteristics listed of what we become because of our relationship with Jesus. List (with Scripture reference) at least ten (10) of these.

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Notes**

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## Flee Fornication

“But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollution of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.”

Acts 15:20

“It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife.” (1 Corinthians 5:1)

**F**ornication is considered a “way of life” in many societies of the world. However, it is an international and cross-cultural sin. It is listed as one of the “Works of the Flesh” in Galatians 5:19-21. In fact, “adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness” are at the very top of the list. Each one of these works of the flesh is sexual in nature.

### Big Words for Big Sins

Adultery-sexual relations of a married person with someone who is not their marriage partner.

Fornication-sexual relations before marriage.

Uncleanness- sexual sins, which would also include our thoughts and the very desires of our heart.

Lasciviousness- is following our passions and desires to the extent that we have no shame or decency in the public. (2 Cor. 12:21)

Each one of these sins ends with a final judgment that the partakers will not enter the kingdom of God and do not have salvation.

“...Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:21)

In the Old Testament every Jewish man was to be circumcised on his sexual organ to remind him of the fact that he belonged to God. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit because the Spirit dwells within us. Fornication committed defiles us. It is like Antiochus Epiphanes who ordered that pigs would be slaughtered on the altar. Antiochus Epiphanes was the Roman Emperor who ruled over the people and knew that pigs were an abomination to the Jews. Can you imagine how the people of God felt about this?

Romans 6:11-13 instructs us not to use our body as an instrument of wickedness. When sexual sins are committed we allow sin to reign in us. We should really present ourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God (Romans 12:1-2).

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.” (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5,7)

In this Scripture we men are instructed to “possess” or manage our vessel. However, men often fail to manage their sexuality.

### How to Stay Out of Trouble

We can protect ourselves from the acts of fornication and adultery by:

1. Bringing our thoughts into captivity to the mind of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5, Philippians 4:8-9) When lustful thoughts come into our mind, start thinking about something else.

2. Plead the blood of Jesus. We should pursue righteousness.

“Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (2 Timothy 2:22)

3. Watch our eyes. Men respond sexually to sight and women respond to touch. Men often give ladies the “eye over” and this should be avoided. Practice not staring. Make “a covenant with your eyes.” (Job 31:1) No immoral act and its pleasure for a moment is worth the pain that it brings to our family, our church, and us. Joseph was one man who was able to achieve mastery over Egypt because he gained mastery over himself. He said, “no” to sexual seduction. He would not sin against His God or Potiphar. Potiphar’s wife cast her eyes at him. Adultery and fornication begin with the eyes, are conceived in the mind, and given birth to on the bed of fornication.

4. Keep away from what we know is a temptation (Beach, television, pornographic movies, books, etc.)

5. Do not be alone with a person of the opposite sex. Always move with one other person making a third party situation.

6. Understand that as men we should be a one-woman-man. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:12). Paul was very concerned that a leader in the church should have the victory over sexual sins. Those who commit them should never be appointed as a spiritual leader in the church. The downfall of the mighty man Samson was he had a SHE problem. David was a man after God’s own heart but his close look at Bathsheba and subsequent act of adultery caused the sword never to leave his door.

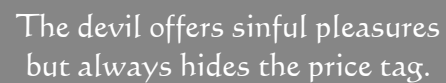
“But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.” (Proverbs 6:32-33)

Within marriage, there is no guilt; no fear of sexually transmitted diseases, especially AIDS. Marriage was designed for maintaining our sexual equilibrium. Outside of marriage, there is guilt and shame. You also become one with the person you commit this act with.

“What! Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall become one flesh...Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that commiteth fornication sinneth against his own body.” (1 Corinthians 6:16, 18)

If you commit fornication you are making a covenant with the person you have fornicated with. When a person does this, he/she is entering into a union with the other person involved. You also run the risk of contracting AIDS and other STD (Sexually Transmitted Diseases). These diseases enter into your body through fornication. Some of these diseases bring death. Many cities of the world are suffering with a very high percentage of the population being HIV (Human Immuno Virus) infected. Fornication also brings unwanted pregnancies and even the sin of abortion is committed in some cases. Abortion is the sin of murder because abortion is the termination of life. In some cases, abortion also results in infertility because of different medical instruments inserted in the womb. Protect yourself against these by following true Christian standards. Stay away from, abstain, and flee from these activities. This will also protect you from the judgment of God.

Before entering into these sins you should “count the cost.” The pleasure in sin is but for a season (Heb. 11:25). Satan will try to get you to rationalize that it is all right for you to commit fornication or adultery. Then after the act is committed, he slyly shifts to become your accuser.



The devil offers sinful pleasures  
but always hides the price tag.

7. We should protect ourselves through prayer and fasting.
8. Maintain an accountability partner by finding someone that you trust. With this person you can share your temptations. This person would become your prayer partner, advisor and listener. This should be someone of the same sex (gender) as you are.
9. Obey the Lord and His Word. We need to study the Word of God on a regular basis. (Philippians 4:8).

“But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you; as becometh saints.” (Ephesians 5:3)

10. Do not touch! When you touch the other person feelings begin to develop that could lead to fornication. Ecclesiastes 3:5 tells us that there is a “...time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing...”

11. Marry young. Dag Heward-Mills in his book, "All About Fornication" encourages people to marry young. "The more Christians delay the marriage ceremony, the more likely they are to end up living in sin...Don't use lack of money as an excuse, because you can marry if you really want to. Marry whilst you are still young. Don't wait until you have all the comfortable things of life before venturing into marriage.

The wife of your youth will marry you not because of what you have, but because of who you are."

**"Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of your youth."  
(Proverbs 5:18)**

12. Maintain standards of holy dress. Women should not attract the attention of men by wearing tight fitting clothing; miniskirts; abstaining from wearing a brassiere; slits in skirts exposing the thighs and legs; and low cut dresses exposing the breasts.

Men should dress modestly with a shirt on and modest trousers. The only person you should be naked before is your marriage partner.

13. If married, the marriage act should be performed regularly. (Proverbs 5:15-19) Be faithful to your marriage partner. "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer: and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." (1 Corinthians 7:5)

14. Do not maintain girlfriends outside of marriage. Some men have their official wife and then unofficial girlfriends. It seems that some men look at their wife as the MAIN GARDEN supplying needs most of the time and then there is always the BACKYARD GARDEN that is kept for special times of want. He may feel that he may even commit adultery (sowing his seed in foreign gardens) and that he would not hurt his own garden by doing that. On the other hand, his own garden, where he plants his seed, would become guilty if it allowed foreign seed to be sown into it. This thinking is a double moral standard and is not in line with the principles of the Word of God. Women are not guiltier than men when sexual sins are committed.

**Study Questions**

1. What is "fornication"? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What is "adultery"? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What is the final judgment for those who involve themselves with fornication or adultery?

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4. Why were Jewish men circumcised? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. According to Romans 6:11-13, when sexual sins are committed, what happens? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. In 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, 8 how should we possess our vessel? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. How can we bring our thoughts into captivity to the mind of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

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8. What is the difference in the way men and women respond (sexually)? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Where does adultery/fornication begin? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Where does the Bible teach that we should be a one-woman-man (or a one-man-woman)? \_\_\_\_\_

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11. According to Proverbs 6:32, what is the result of adultery? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. Why was marriage designed? \_\_\_\_\_

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