FORNICATION / SEXUAL IMMORALITY

NEW TESTAMENT GREEK WORDS:

- porneia - fornication - illicit sexual intercourse
- pornos - a man who indulges in fornication, or a male prostitute
- porne - a woman who indulges in fornication, or a female prostitute
- porneuo - to commit fornication
- ekporneuo - to give oneself up to fornication, implying excessive indulgence

  This term generally focuses on sexual immorality outside of marriage. The word is often used alongside the word adultery, indicating a difference between the two. There are some instances, however, in which the term is used in a broader sense, referring to sexual sin in general (including adultery). [Check the context of the passages.]

FORNICATION AND MARRIAGE

1. Fornication is (potentially) grounds for divorce
   - Matthew 5:32 - Every one who divorces his wife, except for the cause of fornication, causes her to be an adulteress.
   - Matthew 19:9 - Whoever divorces his wife, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery.
   - [Note: Matthew's concept of "divorce" included the breaking of pre-marriage agreements. These two passages endorse what righteous Joseph had been considering doing (Matthew 1:19), when he discovered that Mary was pregnant. He had originally thought she was pregnant because of fornication. (These passages are not making reference to divorce within marriage, but before it. The Jewish vow of betrothal was nearly as binding as a wedding vow; it was like being married, but without sexual intercourse.)]

2. The "marriage bed" must be kept pure
   - Hebrews 13:4 - Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

3. Marriage - It may be helpful for avoiding fornication
   - 1 Corinthians 7:2(+) - But, because fornication (is so common), let each (person) have his own (spouse)... [v. 3 - Let each fulfill his marital duties... / v. 7 - Remaining single is the best option, when the person has the ability to do so, without sin.]

COMMANDS AND INSTRUCTIONS TO THOSE NOT INVOLVED IN FORNICATION

1. Grieve/mourning (over the sins of others)
    - 1 Corinthians 5:1(+) - ... there is fornication among you... and you are proud (filled with an attitude of self-importance)! You should be filled with grief/sorrow/mourning!
    - 2 Corinthians 12:21 - (I fear)... that when I come ... I will be filled with grief/mourning for the many who have sinned and not repented of their ... fornication (etc.).

2. Expel such people from the church (etc.)
    - 1 Corinthians 5 (whole chapter)
    - In other words, consider them to be NON-Christians

3. Don't associate with them
    - 1 Corinthians 5:9(+) - I wrote to you in my epistle to have no association with fornicators...
        - Who this does NOT refer to: people who belong to the "world" - 1 Corinthians 5:10 - ...not at all meaning with the fornicators of this world, (etc.) ...(for then you would have to leave the world!)
        - Who this does refer to: people who claim to be "Christian" - 1 Corinthians 5:11 - I wrote to you not to associate with anyone who is called a "Christian brother," yet is a fornicator, (etc.) ...with such a person, do not even eat!
    - Ephesians 5:5-7 - ... fornicators (etc.) ... Do not be partners with them. [Don't join them in sinning.]

COMMANDS AND INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING PARTICIPATION IN IT

1. 1 Corinthians 10:8 (heed the warning of v. 8, 11) - We must not commit fornication...

2. Hebrews 12:16 - Be careful... so that there will be no fornication (among you).

3. 1 Corinthians 6:18 - Flee fornication.

4. Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25 - Abstain ... from fornication.

5. 1 Thessalonians 4:3 (look at v. 3-8) - It is the will of God, that you be holy, that you abstain from fornication... [v. 8: Whoever rejects this instruction rejects God.]
    - Note: v. 4 can be interpreted 2 ways: The apostle uses a word that can be translated "vessel" - and can be interpreted as either one's (own) body or the body of one's spouse (wife). Either way, the focus is on sexual conduct that is holy and honoring to God.

6. Ephesians 5:3 - But fornication (etc.) ... don't let it even be mentioned among you, as acceptable behavior among God's people.

7. 1 Corinthians 6:13 - The body is not made for fornication, but for the Lord...

8. 1 Corinthians 6:15 - Don't you realize that your bodies are members of Christ (parts of his body)? Should I take part of Christ's body, and join it to a prostitute [fornicator]? Utterly unthinkable!

9. Hebrews 13:4 - God will judge fornicators and adulterers.

10. [See also Colossians 3:5, below. ("Put to death" such things.)]

ABOUT SUCH ACTIVITY

1. About the sin
    - Galatians 5:19 - The works of the flesh [corrupt nature] are obvious, such as: fornication ... (etc.)
    - Colossians 3:5 - Put to death everything in you that originates from an earthly influence: fornication ... (etc.)
    - Romans 1:29 (KJV translation; not in most translations). - [Those who turned away from God, he abandoned them to a depraved mind...] Their lives have become filled with every kind of sin... fornication... [See v. 24(+).]
    - Matthew 15:19 - Out of the heart come... adulteries, fornications, [& all kinds of other sins]. These are the types of things which cause a person to be defiled/unclean.
    - Mark 7:21-22(+) - For from within, out of a person's heart, come [sins, such as...] ...fornications,... All these evil things come from within, and defile the person.

2. About the individual
    - 1 Timothy 1:10 - [The law was not made for righteous people, but...] for fornicators (etc.)
    - 1 Corinthians 6:18 - The one who commits fornication sins against his own body.
    - 1 Corinthians 6:16 - The one who is sexually united to a harlot is one with her in body. [Scripture says: "The two shall become one flesh." Genesis 2:24]

THINGS THAT ARE RADICALLY INCOMPATIBLE WITH SEXUAL IMMORALITY: *CONTRASTS*

1. 1 Corinthians 5:11 - (contrast implied) - being a "Christian brother" vs. being a fornicator

2. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 - fornicators (v.9) who will not inherit the kingdom of God (v. 10) vs. those who have been washed / sanctified (made holy) / justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God (v. 11)

3. 1 Corinthians 6:16-17 - the one who is joined to a prostitute [fornicator] vs. the one who is joined to the Lord

4. Ephesians 5:5-12(+) - (see context) - you who were once darkness (v. 8) (including fornicators - v. 5) vs. you who are now light in the Lord

5. Galatians 5:19-23 - the works of the flesh (including fornication) vs. the fruit of the Spirit

6. Hebrews 12:14-16 - those who follow after sanctification/holiness (without which no one shall see the Lord) vs. those who have fornication, or are ungodly, etc.

7. 1 Thessalonians 4:3 - those who follow after sanctification/holiness (which is the will of God) vs. those who follow after fornication (which we must abstain from)

8. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 - those who commit fornication (which we must flee from) vs. those who glorify God in their bodies

9. 1 Timothy 1:10 - (implied) - (those who are) fornicators, etc., vs. (those who follow after) sound doctrine/teaching

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EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY, ETC.

1. NOTE: See 1 Corinthians 10:8-11 & Jude 1:7: Such things serve as examples and warnings to us.

2. Sodom and Gomorrah - Jude 1:7 - they gave themselves over to fornication (and other types of sexual perversion)

3. Israel
    - 1 Corinthians 10:8 - some of them committed fornication
    - Revelation 2:14 - (Balaam and Balak) encouraged the children of Israel ... to commit fornication.

4. The prodigal son (a parable) - Luke 15:30 - this son of yours... who has wasted your money with prostitutes [fornicators]...

5. The man at Corinth - 1 Corinthians 5:1 - there is fornication among you...

6. (figurative language): Those led by "Jezebel" at Thyatira, and "Jezebel" herself- Revelation 2:20-21 - the woman Jezebel, who ... teaches and seduces my servants to commit fornication, ... and she is unwilling to repent of her fornication. [Results: God will send them intense trials/suffering, including death.]

7. The unrepentant people in Revelation 9:21 - they did not repent of... their fornication

8. "Babylon" in the book of Revelation (NOT a part of this study) - Revelation 14:8; 17:1,2,4,5,15,16;18:3,9;19:2

9. [Used in reference to spiritual matters.] The Jews confronting Jesus: claiming to NOT be born illegitimately ("of fornication") - John 8:41- We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. [See context, including v. 44.]

DO SUCH PEOPLE HAVE ANY REASON TO EXPECT TO SPEND ETERNITY WITH JESUS (IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD, ETC.)?

1. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 - Don't you know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor [list of other types of sinners]... shall inherit the kingdom of God.

2. Ephesians 5:5-6 - For this you can know with certainty: no fornicator, (etc.) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon those who are disobedient.

3. Hebrews 12:14-16 - Without holiness, no one shall see the Lord... see to it that there is... no fornication (among you).

WHAT SHOULD SUCH A PERSON EXPECT (INCLUDING IN ETERNITY)?

1. Hebrews 13:4 - God will judge fornicators and adulterers.

2. Ephesians 5:5-6 - No fornicator, (etc.) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon those who are disobedient.

3. Colossians 3:5-6 - Put to death everything in you that originates from an earthly influence: fornication ... (etc.) Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming.

4. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 - ...abstain from fornication (v. 3) ... because the Lord will avenge/punish for all such sins (v. 7). Whoever rejects this, rejects not man, but God (v. 8).

5. Revelation 21:8 - fornicators (etc.)... their part shall be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. This is the second death.

6. Revelation 22:15 - outside (the New Jerusalem) are ... the fornicators

7. (Example) Jude 1:7 - Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them... serve as an example, (warning us about) suffering the punishment of eternal fire.

8. (Example) 1 Corinthians 10:8,11 - Do not commit fornication, as some of them (Israelites) did, and 23,000 died in one day. ... Now these things happened to them as examples (for us); they were written down to warn us.

9. (Example) Revelation 2:21-23 - She ("Jezebel") was unwilling to repent of her fornication. (I will cast her...) and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works. And I will kill her children (followers).
    - NOTE: In this passage, the terms fornication and adultery seem to overlap.

IS THERE ANY HOPE FOR THE SEXUALLY IMMORAL?

1. From the perspective of what God does:
    - 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 - fornicators, etc. ...such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

2. From the perspective of what we must do:
    - Believe, etc.
        - Matthew 21:31-32 - I tell you the truth, that the tax collectors and the prostitutes [fornicators] are entering the kingdom of God before you (self-righteous religious leaders). For John came to you (proclaiming) the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him. But the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and when you saw it, even then you did not repent, so that you might believe him.
    - Repent (implied by what will happen if repentance does not occur)
        - 2 Corinthians 12:21 - For I fear... that when I come, ... I will have to mourn/grieve over many who have sinned and not repented of their fornication (etc.).
        - Revelation 2:21-22 - She ("Jezebel") was unwilling to repent of her fornication. (And unless she) and those who commit adultery with her repent of her works, ... [impending judgment].

        - Revelation 9:21 - They did not repent ... of their fornication (etc.). [Context: being judged by God]
    - Put it to death
        - Colossians 3:5 - Put to death everything in you that originates from an earthly influence: fornication ... (etc.) [Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming.]

3. Examples of people saved from this sin
    - Rahab
        - Hebrews 11:31 - By faith Rahab the prostitute [fornicator] did not perish with those who were disobedient.
        - James 2:25 - Rahab the harlot justified by (a faith that expresses itself with) works. [see context: faith that does not express itself is a dead, useless, meaningless "faith"]
    - Believers in many places
        - 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 - ... fornicators, (etc.)... such were some of you (Corinthians): but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.
        - Ephesians 5:5-8(+) - fornicators... (etc.)... do not be partakers with them (in their sin). For you were once "darkness" [i.e., committing the types of sins mentioned in v. 5], but are now "light" in the Lord. So walk as children of light.
        - Colossians 3:5-7(+) - Put to death everything in you that originates from an earthly influence: fornication ... (etc.) You once had such a lifestyle, doing such things.

OTHER WORDS TO STUDY (NOT INCLUDED HERE)

1. Adultery, adulterer, etc.
2. Homosexuality
3. All relevant Old Testament passages related to fornication
4. Any other form of sexual depravity or perversity
5. Etc.

NOTE: God's response to *any* of these is consistent with his response to the others. He doesn't say that one of them is a "legitimate lifestyle" and that some of the others aren't. Even a brief examination of Scripture passages on any of these topics will show that God calls *each* of them a sin.

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Scripture: some = my own translation; most are patterned after
ASV of 1901 (public domain), but with the language "modernized."