

JESUS' TEACHINGS ON ADULTERY: A CASE STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE IN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF THE IBADAN METROPOLIS

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Abstract

This study examined Jesus' teachings on adultery in the Synoptic Gospels to determine the extent to which they aligned with Baptist church traditions and the effects of these on the churches. The study was premised on the model of contextual hermeneutics. Baptist Churches of the Nigerian Baptist Convention in the Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria were purposively sampled. This was because the denomination adequately represented the Evangelical Churches. Five hundred and fifty-four copies of a questionnaire were administered. In-depth interviews were also conducted. Mark 10:1-12, Matthew 19:3-12 and Luke 16:18 were exegetically analysed, while the quantitative data were subjected to percentages. The Baptist Churches situated sex within marriage and monogamy. However, in practice, none of them aligned with Jesus' standards completely – sex is a mono-partner affair, which precludes adultery (Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:8) and fornication (Matthew 5: 27-30).

Keywords: Adultery, African Christians, Contextual hermeneutics, Synoptic Gospels,

Introduction

The issue of what constitutes adultery and how it must be handled as presented in Matthew 5:27-30 is one of the most disputed themes in the contemporary times. This is evident in the various meanings and practices within the different Christian denominations.

In Matthew 19:6, Jesus states God's original heart on marriage from the beginning: "So they are no longer two but one flesh. What

therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder". Therefore, marriage, by definition, is a miracle from God, whereby two people are made into one indissoluble union. Sex is seen to take place within marriage. The question of the Pharisees, addressed to Jesus in Mark 10: 2, is about whether it was lawful for the Jews of Jesus' time to divorce. In Mark 10: 11- 12 Jesus replies, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery." In Luke 16:18, the answer is "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery." Jesus' response in Matthew 19:9 is different. He says: "And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery." A careful exegetical examination of the extant material in its context is necessary to assess the degree of coherence and consistency of Jesus' teaching on adultery, particularly among Christians in Ibadan.

Literature Review

Biblical scholars believe that sex and adultery in the Old Testament took different shapes at different dispensations. Deuteronomy 22:13-19 shows that the ancient Israelite tradition (during the patriarchal era) saw sex within marriage as beautiful and enjoyable. Kiel and Delitzsch (2007) aver that, marriage must be founded upon fidelity and chastity on the part of those who are married. Wiersbe (2001) observes that the sexual purity of women was important in Israel in order to maintain the integrity of the family line and therefore the integrity of the tribe. In the times of the prophets, during Hosea's time, the emphasis of the Sinaitic covenant and exclusive worship of Yahweh by the Israelites had degenerated to the point that Yahweh's worship was being mixed with the worship of the Canaanite deities (Bryant, 1967, p.233). For Baal to give rains and material needs of men, there must be "unbridled sexual activity, coupled with excessive indulgence in alcohol" (Bryant, 1967, p.233). Asaju corroborates this, noting that, for Baal to give agricultural yield, there must be indiscriminate sexual intercourse because the level of needed rain for high agricultural yield depended on the level of sexual intercourse (1999, p.78) In the 8th century B.C., Amos, the prophet,

preached ethical monotheism because of the prevailing moral and ethical degradation within the Israelite community (cf. Amos 5:24). Isaiah's stress on strict monotheism in Judah shows that Israel's loyalty had shifted from the Holy God of Israel and, therefore, a call to repentance was necessary.

Brower (2004) refers to the Old Testament and extra-biblical literature that warn about the use of the eye as in Matthew 5:28; but these are not explicitly related to lust. They include Ben Sirach 23:4, 5; Job 31:1; Job 31:9; Ec. 11:9, and several Qumran texts, such as IQS 1:6-7, 11QT 59:14 and 1QpHab 5:7 (2004, p. 296 & 297). He also gives a long list of passages which are explicitly related to sexual lust, notably Ben-Sirach 9:8; 41:19-22; Psalm of Solomon 16:7-8; *T. Judah* 12:3; 17:1; *T. Issa* 7:1, 4:49-54; *T. Benj* 8:2; *T. Reb* 3; 10-12, 4:1, 5:1-5, 6:1 (Brower, 2004, p. 289). Brower (2004, p. 302) opines that, in Matthew 5:28, Jesus does not go beyond the Old Testament since "the tenth commandment addresses the inner disposition of the person in the covenant community. For Jesus, then, the law is being intensified precisely in its own direction".

A careful look at some extra-biblical sources reveals that there are supports for and against women as the cause of the sin of lust which Jesus rejects in Matthew 5:28. Brower quotes :

The spirit of promiscuity resides in the nature and the senses.... For if I had not seen Bilhah bathing in a sheltered place, I would not have fallen into this great lawless act.... An angel of the Lord told me and instructed me that women are more easily overcome by the spirit of promiscuity than are men. For women are evil, my children, and by reason of their lacking authority or power over men, they scheme treacherously how they might entice him to themselves by means of their looks (2004, p. 298).

Here, women are presented as the only cause of adultery since, in his own opinion, women's body is made naturally to seduce, which no man can avoid. This is a major reason why "Jewish men expected married Jewish women to wear head coverings to prevent lust" (Keener, 2000,

p.187). Paul also uses this background with his discussion about head covering in I Cor. 11:2-16.

A Jewish man in the Old Testament, who was entitled to having more than one wife, cannot be called into question by his wife for violating marriage rules (Strecker, 1998, p.71). Guelich, Davies and Allison (1982, p.282; 1988,p.522) also believe that Jesus goes beyond the Old Testament realm by apportioning blame to the man in Matthew 19:9 and Mark 10:11. However, Bach, while commenting on the story of Bathsheba and David, opines that "the objectification of a woman's body" may not be appropriate since God has reasons for creating woman also, in his own image(1997, p.130). Brower supports Vermes and Moore by noting that Jesus is not the only one who believes that the heart and not the woman's body is the seat of evil. This is found in Rabbinic literature, such as IQpHab 5:7; IQS1:6; CD2:16; 11QTS 59:140(2004, p.300). These verses show that the body created by God is good but every lustful look has its root in the heart. Moore furthermore cites the Mekilta de R. Simeon ben Yohai on Exodus 20:14 thus: "You shall not commit adultery. Neither with hand nor foot nor eye nor mind.... From where do we learn that the eyes and the mind commit fornication.... Do not go about after your mind and your eyes, after which you commit fornication." (Brower, 2004, p.300).

Jesus does not go beyond the Old Testament commandment. He has only given the Law the right interpretation as against the interpretation given by the Pharisees. Kent affirms that:

The crucial exegetical point here centres on Jesus' use of the verb ἐπιθυῆσαι, the verb which is used in the LXX version of the tenth commandment and also in the parallel version in Deut. 5:21 (οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ πλησίον σου). Covetousness breaches the tenth commandment. It stands as the epitome of sinfulness as reflected in Paul's discussion in Romans 7. But even in its Old Testament context, the tenth commandment addresses the inner disposition of the person in the covenant community. For Jesus, then, the law is being intensified precisely in its own direction (2004, pp.301-302).

Exodus 20:17 and Deuteronomy 5:12 reveal that the tenth commandment forbids covetousness of the neighbours' wife, his house and possessions. It implies that Jesus' command comes from within the Torah, though greater righteousness can only be achieved by internal adherence to the legal code. Jesus would not blame only women for the sin of lust. The rabbis of his days refused to do this (Borland, 1991, p.106). He did not separate men from women. He "called upon his disciples to discipline their thoughts rather than to avoid women." (Hurley, 1991, p.109). Lust does not have to be fed but can be controlled. Jesus demanded such control from His disciples, allowing males and females to associate together and to work in harmony with one another. Although such social contact between the sexes would be unthinkable to first-century rabbis, Jesus' teaching about the sinfulness of lust helps to explain the relationship men and women sustain both in His earthly ministry and in the apostolic church (Hurley, 1981, pp.109-110). In the early church, women frequently laboured together with men (Acts 16:14-15; Romans 16:3, 12; Philippians 4:3).

Exegesis

Lust as adultery (Matthew 5:27-28)

The seventh commandment states thus: "you shall not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14). The tenth commandment avers that "You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbours" (Ex. 20:17). The same word that is used for "coveting" in the Greek translation of Exodus is the same word which Jesus used for lust in Matthew 5:28 (Keener, 1991, p.18).. ἐπιθυμέω (to lust), normally takes its object in the genitive and, if the accusative, αὐτήν is the subject of the infinitive ἐπιθυμησαί; then the passage should be translated as "the one looking at a woman for the purpose of getting her to lust after him." (Blomberg, 2004, pp.7&8). The use of βλέπων with ἐπιθυμία, desire or lust, indicates that the eyes play an important role in sexual sin, which was not considered as grievous by the Jews and gentiles of Jesus' time. In verse 29, there is a replacement of βλεθη in Nestl- Aland 27th edition with ἀπελθη in D 700mg it sy sc (mea) bo. With the replacement, the sense in reading is seriously affected

with the two words βαλλω and ἐρχομαι. With βληθη, the basic idea is that of casting with an agent carrying out the task. However, with ἀπελθη, it suggests that the going would be intentional. The fact that the use of ἀπελθη is supported by few and late uncial D and, some other few codices, indicate that caution should be exercised before placing any judgment. The use of ἀπελθη as used in the later part of verse 30 perfectly fits that verse than verse 29, although both of them make reference to γενναν. Therefore, the reading with βληθη should be preferred. The use of βλέπω "look" or gaze in the context of adultery is an attempt by Jesus to redefine adultery, and touch the heart of the matter instead of staying at the peripheral level as indicated in the Mosaic Law. For Jesus, adultery in the physical realm is nothing but an end product of a long process of thought that has its root in the heart.

The verb ἐπιθυμῶ is a verbal derivative of the noun ἐπιθυμία "desire" or "longing." The verb appears 7 times in the synoptic and Acts, of which 5 are in Luke and 1 in Acts. It occurs 4 times in Pauline letters, and once in I Timothy, Hebrews, James, I Peter and Revelation. The noun is mostly found in the epistles; 34 times with 10 in Pauline letters and 9 in Deutero- Pauline letters. Ἐπιθυμῶ is derived from the noun θυμός, which can first be translated as "spirit," "courage," "wrath" or "sense," and then as "passion" or "passionate desire." The emphasis of θυμός is on the motif of the desire. The LXX considers θυμός as equivalent of ethical desire for human needs. The word ἐπιθυμῶ is used only five times to refer to negative desires (cf Rom. 7:7; 13:7, I Cor. 10:6). When used in the negative form, it is taken as equivalent of the Hebrew *hāmadh*. Ἐπιθυμητής is often used for godless desire (cf I Cor. 10:6). Some associated words with ἐπιθυμῶ are: ὀρεγομαι "strive for" (Rev 9:6); ζητέω "strive for" (Titus 3:3; Jam. 4:1ff) with ἡδονή "evil" desire.

Ἐπιθυμία, as used in the verbal sense with the participle βλέπων, conveys a strong desire or inclination with deeper emotional implication. βλέπω, in the ordinary sense, means to look at or see something without attaching either mental, psychological or emotional affiliation, but when used with ἐπιθυμία, a compound verb of the preposition ἐπι which can be translated as "around," "with" "about" or "concerning" with θυμός,

“passion” “courage,” it has deeper internal and emotional implications. This does not mean avoidance of women through closing one’s eyes or never to look at women; rather, any look that will bring about ἐπιθυμία needs to be avoided. Another important aspect of Jesus’ statement in this verb lies in the time of committing adultery, as conveyed in ἐμοίχευσεν αὐτήν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ. The use of the aorist indicative ἐμοίχευσεν shows a completed action and points to the end result of the action. In other words, Jesus’ was pointing to the fact that whenever the act of βλέπων and ἐπιθυμία are going on, the act of adultery in ἐμοίχευσεν is usually the result. Therefore, lust should not be treated as a simple and trivial matter. In verse 28, αὐτήν is replaced with αὐτῆς in N’ f’ al: P64 N*pc; Tertius and Clement, where the reading appears as: το ἐπιθυμησαι αὐτῆς ἤδη ἐμοίχευσεν αὐτήν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ. The difference lies in the use of the accusative αὐτήν against the genitive αὐτῆς, both of which are personal pronouns to refer to the object of ἐπιθυμία. The use of simple accusative αὐτήν as the object of ἐπιθυμῶ makes the reading difficult as “to desire or lust her,” rather than the objective genitive as “to desire or lust of redundant, while in the second, the reading is smooth and straight forward. It can, therefore, be established that the replacement with αὐτῆς is a redactorial emendation to smoothen the reading. Furthermore, the replacement as supported by p⁶⁴ raises serious concern about this problem. This is because this Papyrus family is a major witness for Matthew's account. This must not be ignored; the early Uncial families that are in support of the replacement are not original. Copies of earlier ones such as N’ and f’, makes the retention of the accusative αὐτήν to be preferred because it does not only make the reading difficult. It also has a long list of earlier uncial behind, namely B D L W θ. 0233 f¹³ Iraneus and other Latin codices

The use of καρδία “heart” in the locative case carries a significant implication. It presents the heart as a place where the whole act of adultery has taken place. This is a graphic picture of a man’s heart as a place where all his actions are designed and perfected before hatching them out in the physical. Therefore, according to Jeremias (1972, p.227) Jesus does not warn his disciples about women but about themselves. For Jesus, women are not evil in their appearance; it is men

who need to caution themselves in dealing with them. Jesus moved from the physical dimension of adultery to the very root of the matter, which begins in human heart. For Jesus, the physical act and punishment for adultery are something unwanted if the actual root or cause is adequately dealt with. God knows and sees all human hearts in contents and motifs. Jesus reveals that the real act of adultery first takes place in the mind, which later results in the physical.

Frederick and Keener (1993, p.312) observe that, in Matthew 5: 27-28 Jesus extended the concept of adultery in such a way that it gave sexual equality to women. Jesus says that a man looking lustfully at a woman has committed adultery with her. Besides, Jesus was giving protection to women who, then as now, were in positions of vulnerability within a male dominated society and culture. That is, a man interacting sexually with a woman in a way that she finds upsetting, threatening, or degrading is under the same condemnation as actual adultery itself. In Mark 9:42-48, Jesus is also saying that whatever in our lives that makes us stumble must be removed as if by surgery.

Can an act that never involved sexual act be termed adultery? If Jesus, in Matthew 5:27-28, could call an unfaithful thought or lust adultery, a nonsexual act that leads to the breaking of marital vow should be seen as adultery (Luck, 1987, p. 220). Jesus, in His discussion of adultery, showed that this can be a sin of the heart as well as a sin of the body. We commit adultery in the heart when we look with the intention of satisfying lustful desires (Wiersbe, 1971). This may not be inhuman but self-control which is a fruit of the Spirit is a guide in such situations (cf. Galatians 5:23)

Divorce and remarriage as forms of adultery (Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18)

Jesus introduced another facet into the issue of adultery in the New Testament, apart from the lustful looking of Matthew 5: 27-28. In Mark 10:11, divorcing a wife and marrying another is adultery. This was a new and radical saying, for the Jewish law did not regard the misdemeanours of men, but only those of women, as adultery. Divorce was common among Jews in the first century. As revealed in Matthew 5: 32, the husband's action in divorcing his wife is capable of making the

woman to commit adultery if the divorced woman remarries. Here, male sexual sin is emphasized. Adultery is not thought of in terms of sexual misconducts or violation of marriage vows only. It also means that actions which are illicit could lead others to sexual sins. The two passages in Matthew and Mark reveal that women alone should not be blamed for adultery.

In Luke 16:18, marrying someone who has been divorced is adultery; and in Matthew 5:32, 19:9, divorcing a spouse for any reason except for fornication is practically the same as causing the divorced spouse to commit adultery. The man who divorces his wife actually shares in the guilt of the woman's remarriage by *causing* his wife's future adultery. Jesus said, "But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery" (Matthew 5:32). Does this apply only to a person divorced for a cause other than fornication? On the other hand, to the one who is guilty of fornication? The lack of the definite article would suggest any "divorced" person: either an innocent person wrongly "divorced", or a guilty person rightly "divorced" for fornication. Remarriage of any form for any reason in the list of Jesus is adultery. Matthew has Jesus saying that, if a man divorces his wife, he is causing the wife to commit adultery, presumably by marrying another man. In the second case, he imagines a man marrying a woman who has been divorced, and speaks of this as adultery. Mark places the accent on the act of divorcing a wife, while Matthew looks to the remarriage after the divorce, not by the man who divorced his wife, but by the woman who is divorced and by the man marrying her. Jesus spoke not only of the man who divorces his wife and marries another (Mk.10:11; Mt.19:9; Lk.16:18), but also of the woman who is divorced and the man who marries her (Mk.10:12; Mt.5:32; Lk.16:18).

The only acceptable ground for divorcing a wife is sexual immorality. Otherwise, divorcing a wife "causes her to commit adultery". This is so by placing her in a position where she is likely to remarry, in which she becomes an adulteress. The second marriage of a divorced woman was a moral defilement. She could not marry the first again even after the death of her second husband because the defilement of the wife would be thereby repeated. Remarriage is not allowed under

any circumstances after a divorce, with the understanding that divorce itself is only allowed under few circumstances. Jesus seems to be saying that God winked at the hardness of the heart of Old Testament Israelites and overlooked their divorces. This would also be true of their remarriages. In his New Testament teaching, Jesus emphasized that this was not the original intention of God for marriage. In Matthew 19:10-11, the disciples concluded that if it is not possible to remarry after a legal divorce it is better not to marry.

The exegesis of Matthew 5:32; 19:9, Mark 10:11 and Luke 16:18 has raised some issues that must not be overlooked. First, can the man not also commit adultery if divorced? According to Luke 16:18, the man who has divorced also has committed adultery. Second, are there no other serious reasons for divorce than adultery? There are other serious reasons for divorce than adultery. In one of the Baptist Churches for instance, the husband, who happened to be a retired pastor wanted to kill his wife. The wife insisted that she was not going to leave her matrimonial home. The prompt intervention of the Church members in packing the belongings of the wife from her matrimonial home saved her life, but led to her divorce. The woman continues to be a strong member of the church, but when it was time to elect new deacons/deaconesses there were serious objections to her nomination. In Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:32 however, couple could result to divorce only because of sexual unfaithfulness. Even when the teachings of Jesus are taken as a whole in all the passages, Jesus is saying there can be no divorce. Third, life is a complex reality; can one not divorce because of incompatibility to live successfully? Experience has shown that some marriages must lead to divorce because of incompatibility. Nevertheless, in all of the passages divorce is not allowed. It now becomes imperative for unmarried people to consider how compatible they are before they go into marriage to reduce the possibility of divorce

The Meaning and Varied Interpretations of *Porneia*

The inclusion of the exception clause in Matthew 5:31-32 and Matthew 19:9 has given rise to three problems. Firstly, the exception clause is found only in Matthew and nowhere in Mark and Luke. Secondly, Matthew, in the two passages, uses the Greek word πορνεία,

“fornication”, and not the Greek word *μοιχεία*, “adultery”. Thirdly, while most scholars would agree that the two passages are stating the same thing, some would not overlook the structure of the two passages.

A careful look at several passages in the Old Testament and the New Testament reveals that *πορνεία* and *μοιχεία* are used alternatively without any attempt to differentiate between them. The Hebrew word *זָנָה* and the corresponding Greek word *πορνεία* are used of any form of immoral sexual activity, illicit sexual intercourse such as adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, sex with someone not a partner in marriage. Such uses are found in Proverbs 29:3; Jer. 3:1; 5:7, 8; Hosea 4:10; Matthew 15:19; 5:32; Mark 7:21; 1 Cor. 5:7; Jude 1:7. However, The Hebrew word *הִזְנִיחַ* and *μοιχεύω* usually connote married persons having sexual intercourse with others apart from their spouses (Pro. 30:20; Isaiah 57:3; Jer. 5:7; 7:9; Hosea 4:1, 2; Matthew 5:28, 32, Romans 7:3; 2 Peter 2:14). *πορνεία* in the Old Testament and Revelation quite often refers to idolatry, apostasy, syncretism and any spiritual pollution.

The “exception clause” in the Matthew account of Jesus’ teaching occurs in two forms: *παρεκτο (λόγου πορνεία)* (“except on the ground of unchastity”) and *μη· ε.πι· πορνεία* (“except for unchastity”). *πορνεία* is the general term for illicit sexual intercourse, while *μοιχεία* is the normal word for “adultery”. There is a clear distinction between the two terms in Matthew 15:19 (cf. Mark 7:21). The distinction is not pronounced in Gal. 5:19 but in D and a number of later Manuscripts (SS). Nevertheless, *πορνεία* is broad in application and may also include *μοιχεία*. In the Septuagint (LXX), *πορνεία* is used for the sin of married women, as is evident in Gen. 38:24; Hos. 2:2. While *πορνεία* is used in the exception clauses, it is followed by a verb more strictly implying adultery, *μοιχάω* (Matthew 5: 32; 19:9; Mark 10:11), or *μοιχεύω* (Matthew 5: 27-28, 32,). *μοιχαλίζω*, meaning adulteress, is used as a metaphor of those who at a woman’s solicitation are drawn away to idolatry. In James 2:11, *μοιχεύω* is used interchangeably with *πορνεία*. On this note, one assumes that the phrase “except for unchastity” is applied to the married and seems to sanction divorce. If *πορνεία* is interpreted as sexual relationship of any kind, then Jesus would be understood as allowing divorce in cases of sexual immorality. The word *πορνεία* is used in general terms in the New Testament of many kinds

of illicit sexual activity. One example is 1 Corinthians 5:1, which says, "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality (πορνεία) among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife."

Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach that included administration of questionnaire by the researcher in some Baptist churches. Focus group discussions and one-to-one interviews with church members and church leaders were also carried out. The interviews were carried out in five local government areas in the Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. The five local government areas (LGAs) used were Ibadan North, Ibadan North East, Ibadan South East, Ibadan North West and Ibadan South West. They fall within Oyo Central Senatorial District. These were chosen because of the large population and the number of churches existing in these areas. They give a better picture of the various Nigerian cultures in Ibadan.

Copies of three open-ended questionnaires were distributed. Seven hundred (700) copies of the first set (for church members) were given to church members, while 519 were filled and returned. One hundred copies of the second set (for pastors) were given to church leaders, while 26 were filled and returned. Two hundred copies of the third set (for divorcees) were given to divorced members in the selected churches, while 9 were filled and returned. In all, 1000 copies of the questionnaires were distributed. Five hundred and fifty-four (554) of these were well filled and returned.

Analysis

Table 1: Responses on the danger of keeping secrets against one's spouse

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	59	11.4	11.6	11.6
	Disagree	77	14.8	15.2	26.8
	Strongly Agree	170	32.8	33.5	60.2
	Agree	202	38.9	39.8	100.0
	Total	508	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	11	2.1		
Total		519	100.0		

Table 1 reveals that 372 (64.3%) respondents agreed that keeping secrets against one's spouse is a major cause of adultery. However, 136 (26.8%) respondents did not agree that keeping secrets against one's spouse is a major cause.

Table 2: Responses on people's understanding of adultery

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	83	18.0	17.0	17.0
	Disagree	91	17.5	18.7	35.7
	Strongly Agree	153	29.5	31.4	67.1
	Agree	160	30.8	32.9	100.0
	Total	487	93.8	100.0	
Missing	System	32	6.2		
Total		519	100.0		

While attempting a definition of adultery, 313 (64.3%) respondents agreed that adultery is sexual relationship or intercourse with a married/unmarried person, while 174 (35.7%) disagreed. They claim that masturbation and a lustful look are all forms of adultery. This suggests that adultery is more than having sexual relationship. It involves everything that humiliates, seduces and lures a person into sexual immorality.

Table 3: Responses on financial limitation as a cause of adultery

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	80	11.6	11.8	11.8
	Disagree	95	18.3	18.7	30.6
	Strongly Agree	262	50.5	51.7	82.2
	Agree	90	17.3	17.8	100.0
	Total	507	97.7	100.0	
Missing	System	12	2.3		
Total		519	100.0		

As shown in Table 3, 352 (69.5%) respondents viewed financial limitation as one of the reasons why people take to adultery, while 155 (30.5%) disagreed.

Table 4: Responses on lack of sexual satisfaction as a cause of adultery

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	37	7.1	7.5	7.5
	Disagree	56	10.8	11.4	18.9
	Strongly Agree	242	46.6	49.1	68.0
	Agree	158	30.4	32.0	100.0
	Total	493	95.0	100.0	
Missing	System	26	5.0		
Total		519	100.0		

As seen in Table 4, lack of sexual satisfaction on the part of either of the spouses is seen as a major cause of adultery. A total of 400 (81.1%) respondents indicated that lack of sexual satisfaction is a major cause, while 93 (18.9%) respondents disagreed.

Table 5: Responses on the differences in religious beliefs as a cause of adultery

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	93	17.9	19.8	19.8
	Disagree	152	29.3	32.3	52.1
	Strongly Agree	162	31.2	34.5	86.6
	Agree	63	12.1	13.4	100.0
	Total	470	90.6	100.0	
Missing	System	49	9.4		
Total		519	100.0		

Table 5 reveals that 225(47.9%) respondents agreed that different religious beliefs are the causes of adultery, while 245(52.1%) disagreed.

Table 6: Responses on the need for security as a cause of adultery

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	57	11.0	12.1	12.1
	Disagree	132	25.4	28.1	40.2
	Strongly Agree	208	40.1	44.3	84.5
	Agree	73	14.1	15.5	100.0
	Total	470	90.6	100.0	
Missing	System	49	9.4		
Total		519	100.0		

On whether insecurity on the part of either of the spouses is a cause of adultery, Table 6 shows that 281 (59.8%) agreed, while 189(40.2%) disagreed.

Table 7: Responses on whether everybody is involved in lustful looking

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	114	22.0	23.3	23.3
	Disagree	221	42.6	45.2	65.5
	Strongly Agree	107	20.6	21.9	90.4
	Agree	47	9.1	9.8	100.0
	Total	489	94.2	100.0	
Missing	System	30	5.8		
Total		519	100.0		

As shown in Table 7, 335 (68.5%) respondents were of the view that not everybody is involved in lustful looking, while 154 (31.5%) claimed that everybody is involved in lustful looking.

Implications of the responses

1. The respondents in the majority view in Table 1 were mostly men. They claimed that the moment they catch their wives keeping secret with any man, their belief would be that she is having sexual relationship with such a man, even if the man is a pastor. They would not believe that any man would keep such secrets without having sexual relationship with their wives. The issue raised by these men led to an inquiry into why some

women /wives keep secrets with other men and not their children, or other women around. The first reason given by the women was that they would prefer to keep some secrets with their pastors who are men because they are their spiritual leaders. They opined that such a pastor would not disappoint them. They claimed that, most times, their children are aware of their actions. Some women averred that they had trusted their husbands before, but such husbands betrayed them. Five women narrated how they gave money to their husbands for the acquisition of plots of land to build houses but their husbands did not buy the land. These husbands did not return the money. Some women also noted that, if their husbands were polygamists, they would never let him know they were building any house until such was completed. Some pastors claimed that, sometimes, it might be necessary for women to confide in their pastors or elderly men around them especially because of the aforementioned reasons highlighted by the women. They, however, suggested that if such would take place the pastors must be very sure that the problems are real and that such women are not guilty of infidelity.

2. Findings also revealed that financial limitation is also a major cause of adultery. Some claimed that the homes were not poor at the beginning but, when poverty set in, they took to adultery. Consequently, the needs of the home could no more be met. This situation affects children a lot. Many girls take to prostitution locally or are taken to Europe for the same trade (Abogunrin, 2000, p.23). Some wives today also take to adultery all in an attempt to meet family needs. Some women opined that riches and abundance of wealth aid adultery. Because of wealth some men started having extramarital relationships, which led to polygamy in some cases. Similarly, some women became so arrogant that they no longer respected their husbands who, in turn, found solace outside the matrimonial homes. Nevertheless, the view of the 155 (29.9%) respondents who believed that financial limitation is not a cause should not be disregarded, as some take to adultery because they derive pleasure in it. These

people see extramarital affairs as a must and a normal thing. They put no blame on their spouses. This position may be a result of cultural influence on the issue of adultery. A group of 25 married women, aged 55-70, were purposively interviewed. The question posed was whether some women divorced their husbands because of adultery. Eighteen (72%) of these women argued that women of nowadays have no reasons to break away from their husbands save for jealousy. They narrated how they worked for their husbands' concubines, and even prepared beds for their husbands and the concubines. Some of these women granted the interview in the presence of their husbands, and the husbands did not deny all that the women said. However, the women said they did these not because they loved it but because of their children. In fact, it was deduced during the interview that some had not forgiven their husbands even at the time of the interview.

3. The majority view in Table 4 expressed what is happening in most homes. There was the case of a man who was having extramarital relationship. People were surprised at this occurrence because he was a deacon in a big church. The church committee invited the man, and the man told them the truth. He agreed that he was having sex outside marriage. When asked why, he said his wife must be on sit before he answered the question. The woman arrived and the husband asked her when they had sexual intercourse last. The woman, to the amazement of the church committee, said, "six years ago." She was asked why? The woman said that she was turning down her husband's sex proposal because he refused to sponsor the burial ceremony of her father. Some questions are important here: What could have been the cause of lack of sexual satisfaction among couples? Is it cultural orientation? Is it Christian teaching about sex and sexuality or the individuals involved? Culturally, there are two positions about sex: the moralistic view and the naturalistic view. The moralists view sex as something that is meant strictly for procreation, sex is evil and sex for pleasure is forbidden. Women have no sexual rights and, therefore, are not

supposed to have any desire for sex (Coleman, 1988, p.101). The naturalists, on the other hand, see sex as a normal activity, which every individual must cultivate and enjoy. Men and women can discuss sex freely. Each has the opportunity to exercise his or her sexual right (Coleman, 1988, p.101). Most cultures in Africa tend towards the moralistic view about sex. Among the Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa and many ethnic groups in Nigeria, it seems to be a taboo for a woman to demand sex from her husband. The husband would see her as too demanding or idle. Similarly, many cultures believe that sexual relationship must take place in the night. Women at this time are tired and bored; some men likewise. "Distress is trance-inducing because it causes mental fixation and diminishes the possibility of choice." (Bradshaw, 1992, p. 31). Men in such situations cannot get sexual satisfaction. Hence, they go out to have sexual satisfaction. Some pastors interviewed attributed adultery in the church to bad examples from some church leaders. At times, the Church finds it difficult to discuss sex in practical terms. No home can stand without sexual satisfaction, yet most wedding sermons just gloss over the issue of sexual relationship among couples. It is regarded to be too sacred a thing to be discussed openly. Besides, some leaders are into adultery, hence they no longer preach against adultery or preach on it. Some men interviewed said that their wives attended churches where they fast a lot and attend vigils all Fridays in a month. They claimed that their wives denied them sexual intercourse, because they felt that it was a sin to have sexual intercourse during this period. Some even went to the extent of sleeping in the church for weeks and even months, leaving their spouses at home. To solve the problem of lack of sexual satisfaction, 71.6 % of the respondents counselled that couples must see sexual relationship as a responsibility and a right. This will make them to rise up to the task and adultery will be curbed. They opined that one of the spouses should learn to either ask or demand sex from the other, especially when one partner seems not to be interested in it. They warned that sex must not be seen as sin; hence, fasting and

prayer must not be an obstacle to sexual relationship with one's spouse. A total of 60% of the respondents noted that women must cultivate the habit of neatness. They must be tidy and make themselves attractive to their husbands. The respondents advised pastors to intensify their efforts in preaching, teaching and counselling couples on the need for mutual love and self-discipline. Punishment and suspension from church were recommended in some cases of adultery. Some respondents affirmed that the Nigerian Baptist Convention disciplines an adulterous leader either by suspension, dismissal or even by withdrawal of preaching license.

4. The regular acts of hugging or kissing of co-members can lead to a state of familiarity and emotional feelings. This may eventually lead to adultery. While explaining how adultery can be curbed, the respondents advised that sound biblical teaching, preaching, seminars, lectures and workshops should be organized for couples and singles. They also advised that awareness programmes and health talk on sexually transmitted infections (STIs) be done from time to time, and that sex education must be given by churches to teenagers on the evil associated with adultery and fornication.
5. Insecurity is a serious threat to marriage. Apart from financial insecurity, which has been discussed in Table 3, there is the fear of spiritual attacks, job security and status security. A respondent narrated how he caught his wife in the act of adultery. Since then, they had different cooking utensils and foodstuffs. At a point, the pastor was notified and the husband opened up. The man told the pastor that he was already into a sexual relationship with a widow because he found it difficult to trust his wife again. Some take to adultery for social security. The spouse of a higher social status feels that his or her spouse is not presentable enough in some quarters. Some spouses would even feel their partners are not presentable because of the spouse' size and/or weight. To tackle the problems attached to job and social security, 74.3% of the respondents claimed that contentment is very important in the home. Spouses must take note of each

other's limitations, talk about them, improve on the situation and, if possible, cope with and manage it. They added that spouses must be committed to each other, stay very close to each other, live together, be open to each other and cooperate with each other, no matter the situation.

6. The responses showed that adultery, to the majority of Baptist members, is a sexual intercourse between a married and married/unmarried person. However, it is also revealed that lustful looking could lead into sexual immorality. In December 2009, a programme was going on in a church in Ibadan, South West Local Government Area, and a pastor introduced the guest speaker. He felt obligated also to introduce the wife of the guest speaker and he said, "She is elegant, radiant, and very beautiful, matches her husband well, knows how to dress" As he was introducing the wife, some people became uncomfortable and furious. They felt that the pastor was looking at the woman with lust. Some, however, liked the introduction. This researcher, initially, was also not comfortable with the introduction, but later believed that the one introducing the guest speaker was innocent. The question is: how can we know when somebody looks at another person lustfully? While discussing common mistakes in relating to the opposite sex, Welchel writes:

... many singles over react to any attention, from someone of the opposite sex, especially if that someone is attractive to them; if a man looks at us twice, we women can read all kinds of things into it. If a woman happens to sit by a man at a social function, he thinks she's sending him come-ons. There we like the person and respond positively, or we think he or she is being pushy and run the other way, depending upon whether we're attracted to that person or not(1999, p.42).

Truly, many times we misinterpret people's actions, especially when they affect the opposite sex. This makes it very difficult to define lust accurately. We are not talking of lust in terms of "strong desire;" we are talking about sexual fantasies which Jesus refers to as mental desire:

This excitement which leads our minds to imagine or plan sexual involvement with the people we are thinking about These fantasies can become substitute for intimacy, especially when the fantasizing person is unable or unwilling to engage in sexual communication with a real person. Engaging in sex before marriage leaves at least two people abused. Mental lusting primarily influences the one who lusts. According to Jesus, both are wrong (Collins, 1988, p.250).

Lustful looking has two damaging effects. First, it kills the spiritual man; that is, it alienates man from God. Second, it may develop to the point of physical abuse. Many would not insert the penis into a female's vagina, yet they are involved in immoral touching of the sensitive parts of the opposite sex. Many girls, and even boys, have been defiled through this act.

In Jesus' clinic for sexual sin, the doctor's recommendation is always surgery now-no waiting period, no half measure, no consideration of side effects ... An adulterous affair may generate genuinely tender feelings, truer and more affirming than either party knows in his or her marriage. Jesus' solution: End the affair immediately and decisively; cast it away like throwing out an eye-with all the hurt and finality that such an act will involve (Fackler, 2006, p. 134).

Any sexual attachment that will result to disobeying God must be thrown out, whatever the personal price may be (Fackler, 2006, p.134).

To deal decisively with lustful looking in the contemporary world, the respondents (59.4%) opined that all forms of indecent dressing, wearing of revealing clothes, watching pornographic films, unwanted or routine visit among opposite sex, as well as lustful jokes and touching must be stopped. Christians will not be closing their eyes or be running away from other people, but there will always be the need to enlighten and counsel people about proper and godly dressing and jokes.

In a tempting world, there are many things which are deliberately designed to excite desire, books, pictures, plays, even advertisements. The man, whom Jesus here condemns, is the man who deliberately uses his eyes to stimulate his desires, the man who finds a strange delight in things which waken the desire for the forbidden thing. To the pure all things are pure. But the man whose heart is defiled can look at any scene and find something in it to titillate and excite the wrong desire (Barclay, 1975, p.147).

7. An issue in the Baptist church that should not be overlooked is that the constitutions of many of the Local Churches say nothing about adultery and divorce. Many Baptist Churches of the Nigeria Baptist Convention, interpret adultery in line with Jesus' teaching. In Luke 16:18 and Mark 10:11-12, Jesus teaches that all acts of divorce and all acts of remarriage are adultery. Hence, the Church would not even allow divorce on grounds of unchastity. The Baptist Church teaches forgiveness. However, the practice in many of the churches under study is that a divorced or a remarried person cannot hold offices in the church. Some churches allow them to be Sunday school teachers, be baptized and partake of the Lord's Supper. Nevertheless, they cannot go to the seminary, become pastors or deacons/deaconess. By implication people who are divorced or remarried are not full members. The notice was, however, made of the fact that the church expects this group of people to be financial members of the Church. The church collects their tithes, offerings and special donations. As a matter of fact, some of the remarried couple expressed the feeling that the church has been unfair to them because some members have not divorced their spouses, but are involved in extramarital affairs, yet the church allows them full membership. On this, the church leaders said that, once they have not caught them red-handed, they would not sanction them.

Remedies for Adultery

The findings indicated that insufficient funds to meet financial demands could lure a spouse into adultery. Couples should maintain a stable and steady financial status all the time. In cases of poverty, spouses need to endure and work towards coming out of the unpleasant situation rather than taking to adultery.

It is an established fact in this research that the need for sexual satisfaction is a major cause of adultery among couples. Couples, even Christian couples, should know that after love in a marriage comes sex. It will be difficult for any home to stand or endure without giving serious attention to sex within marriage. Pastors and church leaders should recognize and teach their members that human beings, Christians inclusive, are sexual animals. Therefore, any church programme, church activities or spiritual exercise that would separate spouses should be avoided.

Conclusion

This study has explained the various causes of adultery using different parameters. The first solution to the problem of adultery is that Baptist people in the Ibadan metropolis should go back, appreciate and apply some customs and practices that, within various African cultures, curb sexual immoralities. Such issues as the appreciation of the purity of a woman and a man who remain virgins until marriage should be emphasized. Violators, on the other hand, must be subjected to public shame, like it used to be in many African cultures in the past.

Adultery is the one sin which, by its nature, violates the "one-flesh" relationship. There is the violation of the marriage contract by entry into physical relationship with another party. Adultery is a serious sin, whether before or after formal divorce.

This paper calls on the Nigerian Baptist Convention churches to review their standpoints and practices about divorce and remarriage. Some people became divorced and remarried because of the unwholesome attitudes of their spouses. As a matter of fact, some were ready to forgive these attitudes of their spouses, yet they refused. In cases where the church sees that the marriage is irretrievable and that the non-guilty partner is born again, such a partner should be given the status of a

full member. The church should show more concern for the souls of the divorced and remarried people rather than their money. Jesus' teaching in John 8:1-11 on the woman caught in adultery will be a good reference point for the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

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