

Proverbs 20:7 “The righteous who walks in his integrity—blessed are his children after him!”

There were 613 commandments in the Torah, in the Old Testament. Rabbis who counted these out said the first command wasn't love God or no idols, they said the very first commandment in Genesis was, “Be fruitful and multiply.” That deals with proper sexuality. In Genesis 2:24, the idea is that a man and a woman leave their parents to create a new primary loyalty, and their union with each other gets expressed through sexual intimacy...one flesh.

In the Bible, from the very beginning, sex is a sacrament. It's an outward sign that points to an inward reality, to a spiritual state. God is deeply concerned that sex be expressed, enjoyed, savored, and relished in accordance with His design.

One of the words used in the Old Testament for sex is the Hebrew word *yada*. *Yada* is versatile and has several meanings depending on the context.

Sharing Love

- *Adam knew [yada] his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain... (Genesis 4:1)*
- *Cain knew [yada] his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch... (Genesis 4:17)*
- *Adam knew [yada] his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth... (Genesis 4:25)*

Yada is a very intimate kind of knowledge, but a strictly sexual relationship does not mean we are experiencing *yada*. *Yada is dedicating ourselves to a person so we can engage them with our love and affection.*

Showing Mercy

- *The righteous know [yada] the needs of their animals, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel. (Proverbs 12:10)*

Wisdom literature frequently creates a dichotomy between good and evil. In this case, a “good” person knows the needs of their animals and takes care of them; an “evil” person neglects the needs of their animals and shows no mercy. In other words, *yada is understanding the needs of those around us and taking care of them.*

Acting Justly

- *But a beautiful cedar palace does not make a great king! Your father, Josiah, also had plenty to eat and drink. But he was just and right in all his dealings. That is why God blessed him. He gave justice and help to the poor and needy, and everything went well for him. Isn't that what it means to know [yada] me?” says the Lord. (Jeremiah 22:15-16)*

Jeremiah is delivering a scathing rebuke to the king of Judah. This king had acted selfishly, neglected the poor and needy, and exploited others to build his kingdom. God tells this corrupt king what it truly means to know [yada] the LORD.

1. Doing justice.
2. Showing mercy to the poor and needy.
3. Exemplifying good and righteous character.

Yada is faithfully living out our covenant relationship with the LORD in every area of our life.

Yada doesn't just mean sex. When there is *yada*, there is also a relationship. It is not a sterile, abstract, distant knowing. There is caring; there is commitment. *Yada* is personal, experiential, and covenantal knowing.

In the book of Hosea (2:19-20) God says, *And you shall know (yada) the Lord.* It's about a longing we all have deeply in us.

We are also called to be chaste. Chaste means far more than just avoiding unmarried sex; it includes our whole person. It includes our behavior, and our attitudes, our thoughts, and what we choose to feed our mind on. It means we are grateful we were made a male or a female, a sexual being, and we seek to keep our bodies and our sexuality utterly and joyfully submitted to God.

The image of a marriage runs right through to the very end of the Bible. It is a picture of God knowing His people. We, as a church, are called to “present everybody mature in Christ,” that means we must form relationships in gospel communities. We have to be a community where married people and single people are actually like a family together.

No matter what our history is, Jesus came to redeem and restore; that's grace. Jesus died and rose for His bride. There is no sin in the world He lacks the power to forgive. There is no regret anyone has that He lacks the power to redeem.