IMMORALITY

I. Representative Biblical references
   A. Old Testament
      1. Hebrew word zahnah - "adultery, fornication or harlot"
      2. Representative usage
         Gen. 38:24 - "your daughter-in-law has played the harlot"
         Ps. 106:39 - "they became unclean in their practices, and played the harlot in their deeds"
         Prov. 5:1-23 (whole chapter)
         Prov. 7:1-27 (whole chapter)
   B. New Testament
      1. Greek words
         porneia - (noun) - "immorality"
         porneuo - (verb) - "to commit acts of immorality"
         porne - (noun) - "prostitute, harlot"
         pornos - (noun) - "immoral persons, male prostitute"
      2. Representative usage
         Matt. 5:32/19:9 - "divorces..except for the cause of unchastity/immorality"
         Matt. 15:19/Mk. 7:21 - "out of the heart come adulteries, fornications"
         Acts 15:20,29; 21:25 - "abstain from idols and from fornication"
         I Cor. 5:1 - "there is immorality among you..."
         I Cor. 6:13 - "the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord"
         I Cor. 6:18 - "flee immorality.. the immoral man sins against his own body"
         I Cor. 7:2 - "because of immoralities, each man have his own wife"
         I Cor. 10:8 - "nor let us act immorally"
         II Cor. 12:21 - "not repented of impurity, immorality, sensuality"
         Gal. 5:19 - "deeds of the flesh are immorality, impurity, sensuality"
         Eph. 5:3 - "do not let immorality or impurity be named among you"
         Col. 3:5 - "consider the members of your body to be dead to immorality, impurity, passion...which amounts to idolatry"
         I Thess. 4:3 - "the will of God is your sanctification, that you abstain from sexual immorality"
         Rev. 2:14,20,21; 9:21; 14:8; 17:2,4; 18:3,9; 19:2

II. Definition of the terms
   A. Greek words porneia and variables
      1. KJV translates as "fornication"
         a. English usage often refers to premarital sexual relations, but actually broad enough to be synonymous with "immorality"
      2. porneia refers to sexual intercourse outside of the context of marriage; sexual intercourse between two persons who are not rightfully married as husband and wife.
   B. English word "immorality"
      1. Meaning: "Not consistent with morals"
      2. Morals
         a. From Latin moralis - "custom, manners"
         b. mores - binding customs of a particular group
      3. Immorality is whatever is contrary to the societal standards of a particular group
III. Pornography
   A. What is pornography? How do we determine what is pornographic?
      1. Is exposure of the human body wrong?
      2. How much exposure? face? (Arabs); arms, legs?(Victorians); torso?; genitals?
   B. U.S. Supreme Court has decided that pornography is determined by local standards of morality and custom.
   C. Defining pornography
      a. *porneia* - sexual intercourse of persons not married; *graphe* - writing or pictures.
      b. Technically, pornography is a graphic portrayal of sexual intercourse between persons not married to one another.

IV. What is the real issue?
   A. The real issue is not morality.
      1. Christianity is not morality.
      2. Religion tries to attribute morality to actions
      3. Sexual intercourse is amoral. God made it possible when he created mankind "male and female" (Gen. 1:27). "Very good" (Gen. 1:31)
      4. Spiritual character of good or evil can be expressed within the act
         a. godly, righteous, faithful character
         b. sinful, selfish, unfaithful character
      5. The problem is not solved by censorship or censure of graphic portrayal or actions; legislated morality
   B. The real issue is the character of God.
      1. God's character is that of purity, holiness, faithfulness, love
      2. The only way to have and express such is spiritual regeneration
      3. Such character will first be found in thought and emotion, and then in action.
         a. Possible to have sexual intercourse with married spouse and to be "immoral" in character
      4. Failure to have God's character in the midst of our sexual thoughts, graphic portrayals and actions will be "immoral"
      5. The alternative to having the character of God in such is to have the character of the Evil One, the Devil.
         a. Immorality and adultery are identified with death
            *Prov. 5:5*
            *Prov. 7:22,23,27*
         b. Immorality and adultery are identified with idolatry
            (1) To do so is to ascribe "worth" to, and to live for, something other than God.
            (2) Acts 15:20,29; Gal. 5:19,20; Col. 3:5; Rev. 2:14,20
      6. The avoidance and overcoming of immorality is only by the indwelling presence and outworking expression of the character of God in Christ within our sexual thought and behavior.