

St. Gabriel of Our Lady of Sorrows
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Home Study Lesson 5

Sixth, Ninth, and Tenth Commandments

GOAL

The goal of this night is to help the teens understand the virtues of chastity and purity and their responsibility to practice those virtues in all relationships. Furthermore, this night will help the teens understand the importance of respecting the relationships, families, and possessions which belong to other people.

6th Commandment: You shall not commit adultery.

9th Commandment: You shall not covet (desire) your neighbor's wife.

10th Commandment: You shall not covet (desire) your neighbor's possessions.

TEACHING

Two of the Ten Commandments (the Sixth and Ninth) are about sex; it's obviously a big part of how God wants us to live. One of the biggest misconceptions about the Church and sex is that the Church just wants you to suppress anything that has to do with sex or romance. That's not true at all – in fact, the Church calls for the “successful integration of sexuality within the person.” We're not called to erase or destroy sex – we're called to live it out in the holy way it was created. The Church calls this our “vocation to chastity.”

Chastity is a virtue that's related to temperance – the ability to master our own desires and choose what God wants over what we want.

There are areas in which we can fail or fall in chastity. All sins against chastity are a choosing of ourselves over others and Christ. When we decide that what we want – attention, pleasure, popularity – is more important than truly loving others (including God), we sin against chastity.

Each of us is called to live out chastity in the way that fits our current state in life. For a single person, chastity looks different than it does for someone who is married. Someone in the religious life practices chastity in a different way than a married person. Everyone, though, lives out the same virtue of chastity. Knowing this, we can see that marriage is important – it’s a Sacrament, it’s where new life comes from, and it’s a source of great grace for those inside it. Because of this, the Church defends and safeguards the bonds of marriage. Divorce, civil unions, adultery, bigamy – these things attack chastity and tear at one of our most powerful Sacraments. The Church doesn’t take these positions to limit people’s “happiness” or make everyone simply follow her rules; she is called to defend and protect one of the most important expressions of love in human history.

MODEST IS HOTTEST

We’re called to be modest, which is to have pure hearts. “The heart is the seat of the moral personality,” the Catechism teaches us. The sixth Beatitude tells us that the pure in heart are blessed with getting to see God.

So how do we live out purity of heart? Well, there are a few areas we can focus on. The first area is our minds. So much of our struggle for purity takes place in our minds; Christ tells us that the sin of adultery happens in our thoughts, even before anything has been done physically. We need to strive to control our thoughts, learning how to focus ourselves on good and holy things and avoid the occasions of sin. Think about what you fill your head with each day – are these things creating thoughts of modesty and purity? Do they start me down the road to sin and lust? Safeguarding our thoughts is an important step in our chastity.

Next, we have to be pure in our speech. Words can slip out of our mouths without even thinking about them, but words are also tremendously powerful. Christ uses words at each Mass to transubstantiate bread and wine into His Body and Blood – that’s how powerful words are! Our words must not only be pure in and of themselves, but they need to inspire purity in others. This brings up things like cursing, but also the kinds of suggestive jokes and comments we can make that place all our minds into occasions of sin.

A big way we practice purity and modesty is in our actions. Many times we think of purity and action and think of the “don’t’s.” Chastity calls us to do some things such as work to grow in purity by actively taking time to pray, to clear our heads and listen to God’s voice. By going and soaking in the graces of God, we purify our hearts, minds, and bodies and move closer to a life in Christ. We can also take steps to make ourselves “masters of our wills” by learning to sacrifice things our bodies might want. By fasting from things like soda, television, or even social media, we can grow in willpower and be better prepared to resist the urges of temptation.

The fourth and final area in which we can grow in purity is in our appearance. This is a tremendously important area to practice modesty. Modesty doesn’t mean, “I have to look ugly.” It’s actually a way that we can highlight the beauty that God has created us with, because we dress and present ourselves as complete persons – not just a body (or certain body parts). Whether male or female, we are able to communicate the respect and dignity of our bodies and our personhood through the way we dress. Our bodies are a gift from God, and we are called to protect their dignity. Also, by dressing modestly, we can avoid leading others into temptation. Modesty in appearance isn’t simply about clothes, though. The way we use our bodies – how we act on a dance floor, for example – reveals the respect we have for ourselves and for those around us. Our bodies can say a lot with simple gestures – think about how small the Sign of the Cross is – but people have died for making that one small movement of their arm.

You can see that what we thought was the simple idea of chastity actually covers a lot of areas. And our chastity does not just involve the people we date. We are called to respect our friends and their chastity as well. We might not be attracted to our friends or worry about our romantic modesty with them, but we can protect their dignity and privacy by being true and respectful friends. That is why it’s important to avoid the sins of gossip and scandal. Those sins don’t simply hurt us, they hurt the people we talk about and rob them of their privacy and dignity. When people don’t have the right to know something, protect your friendships and your friend’s dignity and keep things in confidence to yourself.

Chastity is something we are all called to – and like the other commandments and “rules” we’ve seen so far this semester, living chastity can actually lead to our happiness. The graces that come from chastity are extremely powerful, and as we strive to live purely each day, know that God is ready to bless your efforts.

Close by praying for the grace to grow in the virtue of chastity.

Say a Hail Mary for the Blessed Mother’s intercession.

QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to be pure of heart in your thoughts, words, actions, and appearance?

2. What are some ways you can or have practiced the virtue of chastity in you life?

3. How does jealousy (ie. being jealous of another person's relationships or possessions) go against the 6th, 9th, and 10th commandments? (Hint: think respecting other people)

4. How does this lesson relate to last week's lesson?

5. Explain in your own words why these commandments are so important.