

8th Grade Homestudy Lesson #6

The Sixth Commandment

GOAL

The goal of this lesson is for you to understand sexuality in light of the sixth commandment, as well as how integrity upholds the goodness and intention for human sexuality.

The Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord your God, you shall not have any other gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Keep holy the Lord's day.
4. Honor your father and mother.
5. You shall not kill.
- 6. You shall not commit adultery.**
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's possessions.

MAIN IDEAS

- God created humanity male and female. Our sexual identity is a part of our biological makeup and immortal souls.
- In marriage, a man and a woman give of themselves completely to one another, and their sexuality becomes a gift to the other.
- The sixth commandment reveals the importance of our sexuality. It calls us to live lives of chastity and to be people of integrity as we uphold the dignity of one another.

TEACHING

Overview

The sixth commandment — you shall not commit adultery — calls us to the highest level of integrity in both our personal lives and in the way we treat and relate to others, particularly in regard to sexuality. God created humanity male and female, and “inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus capacity and responsibility, of love and communion.” Sexual identity as a man or a woman is revealed in our God-given biological sex, which is

intrinsically linked to our immortal soul. Sexual identity is a gift that involves the whole person — in particular, the capacity to love, procreate, and form bonds with another.

This ability involves our whole person, body and soul; thus, men and women should accept and acknowledge their sexual identity, as well as the fact that they are created with different, complementary qualities and equal dignity. (CCC 2331-2336)

We are called to chastity, which is “the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being.” Chastity involves the integrity of both the human person and the gift of sexuality. This can only be found in self-mastery of passions and acting from conscious, temperance, and free choice rather than impulses. (CCC 2337-2359)

THE CHALLENGE

There are a lot of things in life that are going to be difficult to handle, understand, and live out in a Christ-like way. As we face difficult situations, it is important to strive for holiness and integrity — to always do what is right, even if no one is watching. Integrity should be a part of every relationship in our lives, especially when we consider our sexual identity and the relationships between men and women. When we talk about sexual identity, we are not just talking about our bodies; we are also talking about our souls. God created men and women, and that identity is more than just the biological makeup of our bodies — it is a part of who we are. We are made male and female in God’s image and likeness. Being male or female affects the way we love, create life, and bond with others; it affects the way we interact with everyone around us. (CCC 2332) We are all called to accept our sexual identity — to see that God created us a man or a woman for a reason — and to celebrate the similarities and differences between men and women. (CCC 2333-2334)

INTEGRITY

The relationships between men and women and their sexuality are important, so God gave us the sixth commandment to guide us. In His teachings, Jesus addresses the importance of following this commandment. (CCC 2335-2336)

THE GOAL AND THE GIFT

We are all called to love and serve one another — this is true for family relationships, friendships, and in a very particular way between one man and one woman in marriage. Our sexual identity as men and women is a part of our whole being. In marriage, sexuality becomes a gift from one spouse to the other in a specific and profound way, different from any other relationships. (CCC 2360) The union of a man and a woman in marriage is so strong that it creates a lasting bond between the two. As they give themselves entirely to one another, they

have the ability to create new life. (CCC 2362-2363, 2366-2379) It is this special union and bond of the married couple that the sixth commandment protects when it calls spouses to be faithful to each other and to not break their bond or give themselves to another. (CCC 2364-2364)

FOR YOU/FROM YOU

While one of the greatest gifts of sexuality is lived out in the marriage union of a man and a woman, it does not mean that this commandment does not apply to your life now. • Even in middle school, you are called to follow this commandment and live in a Christlike way. One of the ways you do this is by embracing your sexual identity as a man and a woman and learning to live a life of chastity. (CCC 2337) Living a virtuous life as men and women is hard work. Just like we work hard to train our bodies and learn self-mastery physically, we also have to work hard to train spiritually and practice chastity.

To train our bodies we workout, eat healthy and nutritious foods, and get an ample amount of sleep. To train ourselves in chastity, we have to pay attention to what we watch, what we listen to, how we talk to each other, what we think when we look at someone, and what we wear. Chastity is central to being a person of integrity and following this commandment. Chastity is learning self-mastery of your passions, which means learning not to act on your emotions or impulses; rather, you act through right reason and choose to do what is right, even if it is hard. (CCC 2338-2345) This means that you are called to treat everyone with the respect they deserve and that your sexual identity informs good actions and integrity — doing what is right always, even if no one else is around to hold you accountable — rather than sinful behaviors.

As we learn to live lives of chastity and treat one another with dignity, we can become a gift of self to those around us. We can be a gift of self when we properly love other people in our various relationships and when we serve those around us by using the gifts and talents God has given us. The sixth commandment shows us what not to do, but it also instructs us on how to live holy lives by seeing the beauty and integrity of our sexual identity, how to live lives of chastity, and how to be a gift of self to others.

SEND

To close this lesson, please pray the following prayer for the gift of chastity:

Jesus, Lover of chastity, Mary, Mother most pure, and Joseph, chaste guardian of the Virgin, to you I come at this hour, begging you to plead with God for me. I earnestly wish to be pure in thought, word and deed in imitation of your own holy purity.

Obtain for me, then, a deep sense of modesty which will be reflected in my external conduct. Protect my eyes, the windows of my soul, from anything that might dim the luster of a heart that must mirror only Christlike purity. Give me the strength to harness my desires and purge my soul of all that will lead me far from you.

Amen

QUESTIONS

1. What is “chastity”?
2. Why do you think it is important to learn self-mastery and to live lives of chastity?
3. How is growing in virtue, specifically the virtue of chastity, similar to training for a sport, skill, or competition?
4. What is the importance of your God-given, biological sex?

5. How do the Church's teachings on sex differ from the accepted attitudes of our modern culture?