

## We Can Do This

9<sup>th</sup> in a series on The Ten Commandments

### Leaders Guide

1. Read Exodus 20:14 and paraphrase the seventh of the ten commandments.

“Don’t have sex with someone to whom you are not legally married.”

2. Pastor Judy said that this could be reworded to be a positive instead of what seems to be a punitive command? How would you word the seventh commandment as a positive statement?

Be faithful to your spouse and enjoy the richness of the relationship that results.

3. This commandment applies not only to those married, but also to those who are not married. How is it that choices we make when we are not married can affect what happens in your relationship when later you are married.

a) We can pick up bad habits (such as visiting Internet porn sites) that are difficult to break even after we are married.

b) Memories of things we have done can stick with us for a long time afterward and come back to mind long after we have entered a marriage relationship

c) We can cross paths with people we hurt before we got our act together and at best that is an awkward situation for our new spouse to have to deal with.

4. On the first level, as “Law”, what is the significance of the seventh commandment?

It’s pretty simple. Just don’t commit adultery. Even the secular world recognizes that infidelity weakens (if not destroys) marriages. Crumbling marriages weaken society. It’s more than just making babies to populate the next generation. The very fabric that holds society together depends on strong family units.

5. Jesus then takes it to the next level. Read Matt. 5:27-32. How does this broaden the scope of the seventh commandment?

Now it is not just the physical act of having sex with someone who is not our spouse, but it is even thinking about it that is a sin. Our thoughts and desires now come into question, because the mind and heart are so tightly bonded.

6. Thus, on the second level (Vow) Jesus commands us not to lust. Given the saturation of the press and entertainment industry with sexual images and messages, how do you keep yourself from having stray thoughts once in a while?

We are still vulnerable to sin, so by ourselves we not going to be able to remain unaffected. However, we can pray that God will fill our lives (and therefore our minds) with things that are important to Him, such that we will have no room for the wrong stuff. Having done that, we can then begin taking action to make that happen. By consciously

selecting the things we read, view, and listen to, we can fill our lives with things that do not contribute to breaking the seventh commandment with our minds or our bodies. By loving our spouse (to whom you have made a marriage vow) and thinking constantly of them, we can focus on being faithful, which leaves no time for the wrong influences.

7. On the third level (Nature or Calling) we see that God has a very special plan for this marriage relationship that mirrors His plan for the church as it relates to Christ. Read Ephesians 5:21-33. What are the features of marriage as God environs it?

It is not about what one should expect from the other in the relationship, but what you are invited to give. We submit to one another as a gift of reverence to God. Marriage is more than a commitment; it is one of God's divine strategies created to help renovate humanity to our original potential. As we begin to get that right, we begin to get our relationship with God right.

8. Pastor Judy stated that a good marriage can cause us to become holy and blameless. How is that possible? Isn't that God's job?

If we believe that we act on God's behalf toward other people, why would we not fill that role with our spouse? To the extent that we can practice true love, respect, and honor toward our spouse, are we not then better equipped to do that with God? In the same way, we are not going to change God, so our focus should not be on changing our spouse. Thus, there clearly are direct connections between working on making our marriages strong and building up our relationship with God.

9. In what ways did Christ demonstrate that He loved the church?

He left heaven, shared his dreams with the early believers, lived with them, and finally sacrificed everything for them. He thought about the church and her needs.

10. Is there a parallel between those expressions of love exemplified by Christ and a marriage relationship?

We leave our parents, share our dreams with each other, live together, and willingly sacrifice whatever it takes to make our marriage strong and enduring. We think about our spouse and their needs, rather than focusing on our own.

11. How does all this relate to the admonition for spouses to submit to one another?

Submission is an invitation to partner. It is a voluntary attitude of subjecting yourself to the other. We listen to each other, minister side-by-side, respect each other, honor each other, and cooperate with each other. None of that can happen if we aren't in a loving relationship that looks a whole lot like Christ's love for the church.