

“YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY”

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Readings: Genesis 2:15-25; Conjugal Love 20

The Lord’s commandment against adultery is the sixth commandment given to the children of Israel at Mount Sinai. Perhaps you will think it is only the sixth in importance after five other more important ones, but did you know that in the New Testament in two places the Lord lists it first among the laws that must be obeyed if we wish to go to heaven? (see Mark 10:19 and Luke 18:20). And in the Word for the New Church the Lord teaches that the love of adultery is the fundamental—the first or most basic—of all evil loves (*Apocalypse Explained* 981). So you can see that it is certainly very important for us to understand and obey this commandment.

Do you know what is meant by “committing adultery”? Basically, it is a kind of *confusion*, a mixing together of two or more things that do not belong together. Both may be good things by themselves, but if they are mixed together in a wrong way, there is a form of adultery.

Take for example gasoline and honey. You know that gasoline is very useful and important for many things. It is a good thing in its place. And you know that honey is a wonderful, sweet food; it is also a good thing. The two liquids even look a little bit alike. But if you mixed gasoline with honey—no matter what they look like—you would spoil both things, and neither would be good for anything! The gasoline is bad for the honey, and the honey is bad for the gasoline. They have been *adulterated*, even though they started out as perfectly good things.

Another example is flour and sand. They look a little bit alike, and they are certainly both good things. One use for sand is to make cement, which is very important for our roads and buildings. And flour is used to make bread and cakes, also very good for people. But if you mixed sand into your flour, think what sort of cake it would make! In that case the sand is bad, and we say the flour has been adulterated.

Now think of a man and a woman, a husband and wife. The Lord has told us in His Word that the marriage, or joining together, of one man and one woman for the sake of heavenly uses is among the most happy and important things in life, and the love that joins them together is among the most precious. What is more, the Lord provides that somewhere, either in this world or in heaven, there is one special woman for every man, and one special man for every woman to marry. We read in the Word, “For this reason a man shall leave his

father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh....' So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matthew 19:4-6).

So a true marriage of one man with one woman is a perfect mixing. Both partners are made happier than they could ever be by themselves, and both are then able to do many wonderful things together that they could not do by themselves. For example, they can have children and together teach them the way to heaven so that they may become angels. And they help one another in many other ways, too. But when a man is joined together in marriage with his wife and then mixes with another woman as if she too were his wife, or takes another man's wife to be like a wife to himself, then that is the worst kind of adultery. It is confusion, and what's more, it makes confusion out of everything else so that gradually, if adultery is permitted, one by one all the other commandments are broken as well! Adultery ruins true marriage, the most precious thing in life, and so it is a wrong mixing. It is a little like mixing gasoline and honey—not only is it very bad, but very dangerous, as you can imagine!

But you are not old enough to “commit adultery” in marriage, so you may wonder why this commandment is so important to you. First of all, you must remember that we learn all of the most important things about life when we are children, and we must prepare ourselves as soon as possible to obey all the commandments. We can learn not to commit adultery by learning how important and how lovely true marriage is. We can learn this by watching married people around us and by paying close attention to the stories in the Word about marriage and weddings. And we can learn it by finding out what sorts of things mix well and what things do not mix, and then following the rules of good mixing.

Did you know that even our thoughts and our actions can be mixed in a good or bad way? So people can have good mixings or marriages in their minds, and they can also commit adultery in their minds if they are not careful. For *whenever* something good or true is mixed with something that is wrong or out of place, there is adultery. Let's take an example: thinking of the Lord is very good, of course; thinking of a funny joke can also be very good, in its proper place. But if you mix the two things together in your mind, do you not commit adultery? Yes, and not only that, but you would be taking the Lord's name in vain as well. You also know that going to church is good, and very important; going to work, buying things, selling things, or playing games is also important and useful. But now you can see that mixing them all together in the wrong way would be a kind of adultery, and it would also be breaking the third commandment about keeping the Sabbath day holy. So it is that adultery makes us break all the commandments, one by one, and it makes confusion out of everything. Therefore, it is the commandment to be most careful about.

Everyone knows that confusion makes people very sad. Naturally, then, there is no confusion in heaven, for heaven is happiness itself. And the thing that makes heaven so happy is the wonderful way in which all angels are married, joining together and helping one another, sharing and mixing all good things together in the proper way. This heavenly marriage is the very opposite of adultery, and so we prepare for heaven by shunning all kinds of adultery as sins against the Lord, according to the sixth commandment.

Amen.