

# 6th Commandment



PRACTICE  
MARITAL  
FIDELITY

**G**od created human beings as male and female. In so doing, he gave equal dignity to both man and woman. In his plan, men and women should respect and accept their sexual identity. God created both the body and sex as good. Hence, we do not approach sexuality with fear or with hostility to the flesh. It is a gift of God by which men and women participate in his saving plan and respond to his call to grow in holiness.

**The *Catechism* states** that sexuality involves the whole person. “*Sexuality* affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others” (CCC, no. 2332).

**The Sixth Commandment** summons spouses to practice permanent and exclusive fidelity to one another. Emotional and sexual fidelity are essential to the commitment made in the marriage covenant. God established marriage as a reflection of his fidelity to us. The vows

made by the spouses at their wedding to be faithful to one another forever should witness the very covenant God has made with us.

## CHASTITY

**All people—married, single, religious, and ordained—**need to acquire the virtue of chastity. “Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being” (CCC, no. 2337). Chastity unites our sexuality with our entire human nature. It approaches sexuality as related to our spiritual natures so that sex is seen as more than a physical act. Sexuality affects the whole person because of the unity of body and soul. Jesus is the model of chastity. “Chastity includes an *apprenticeship in self-mastery* which is a training in human freedom” (CCC, no. 2339). The acquisition of chastity depends on self-discipline and leads to an internal freedom, which enables human beings to temper sexual desires according to God’s plan for the appropriate expression of love in the marital relationship of a man and a woman.

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The *Catechism* describes the acquisition of chastity in the following way:

**“Self-mastery is a long and exacting work.** One can never consider it acquired once and for all. It presupposes renewed effort at all stages of life. The effort required can be more intense in certain periods, such as when the personality is being formed during childhood and adolescence.”  
(CCC, no. 2342; cf. Ti 2:1-6)

**“Chastity has laws of growth** which progress through stages marked by imperfection and too often by sin.”  
(CCC, no. 2343)

**“Chastity presupposes respect** for the rights of the person, in particular the right to receive information and an

education that respect the moral and spiritual dimensions of human life.”  
(CCC, no. 2344)

**Chastity is a moral virtue.** It is also a gift from God, a *grace*, a fruit of spiritual effort. The Holy Spirit enables one whom the water of Baptism has regenerated to imitate the purity of Christ.” (CCC, no. 2345; cf. Gal 5:22, 1 Jn 3:3)

**“The virtue of chastity blossoms in friendship.** . . . Chastity is expressed notably in *friendship with one’s neighbor*. Whether it develops between persons of the same or opposite sex, friendship represents a great good for all. It leads to spiritual communion.”  
(CCC, no. 2347)