

The Kingdom of Heaven

Mark 10

LEVEL 4 – THE HOLINESS OF MARRIAGE



Read the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20: 1-17. Some of them are listed in this order:

- Honor father and mother
- Not to murder
- Not to commit adultery
- Not to steal
- Not to bear false witness

(If we listed all ten, we would not put “honor to parents” first, but we are just listing some of them.)

The commandments are mentioned many times in the Word. But they are not always in the same order. It depends what subject that chapter in the Word is emphasizing.

Look up the commandments mentioned in *Jeremiah*, *Matthew* and *Mark*. The three lists will show the different sequences of some of the Ten Commandments.

Jeremiah 7:9

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1) _____ | 3) _____ |
| 2) _____ | 4) _____ |

Matthew 19:18-19

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1) _____ | 4) _____ |
| 2) _____ | 5) _____ |
| 3) _____ | 6) _____ |

Mark 10

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1) _____ | 4) _____ |
| 2) _____ | 5) _____ |
| 3) _____ | 6) _____ |

The Holiness of Marriage

In different contexts and for different reasons, certain commandments are of central importance. You notice that in Mark 20 the commandment against adultery takes the number one place.

It is not hard to see that a reason for this is that in this chapter we have one of the outstanding places in all of the Word for emphasis on the holiness of marriage.

In Mark 10 in the New King James Version, the lovely verses on marriage go like this:



From the beginning of the creation
God made them male and female.”

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.

(Mark 10: 7-9)

The wrong of adultery

The same chapter also talks of the harm of adultery. In a dictionary you find that the word “adultery” means “to make inferior, impure, not genuine by adding a harmful, less valuable or prohibited substance. The wrong of adultery is the wrong of taking anything that is really good and clean and making it into something low and degrading.

The more you know about the quality of true marriage, the more you see that adultery against marriage is so harmful.

Remember the eager young man asking the Lord what he should do to receive eternal life:

Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

(Mark 10:17)

And the Lord replied:

You know the commandments...

...and the first commandment the Lord mentioned was the one against adultery, The commandment about doing what is harmful to marriage.



The innocence of married love

The teachings of the New Church emphasize the beauty and good of marriage and married love more than do any teachings in the world.

The Writings teach that married love is holy, pure and clean. They teach that those in married love have innocence and peace. Do you know what the quality of innocence is? A quick way of capturing its quality is to think of the way you are affected by a very sweet baby or child.



So it is not surprising that after the beautiful words about marriage in *Mark 10*, we find the subject of little children. The Lord took little children into His arms, and He said that anyone who wants to go to heaven must be “as a little child.”

Powerful illustrations from the Writings

The Writings give very clear and simple ways of learning the quality of true marriage love and the quality of the harmful love of adultery.

Think of two bunches of grapes which seem to be the same, but one has a beautiful taste and the other a horrible taste. Well, that is one illustration, using the sense of taste.

Before you read the following comparison, which uses the sense of smell, think to yourself of a smell that you really like that makes you feel good. Then think of a smell that you find very offensive that makes you sick at the stomach.

As Swedenborg was learning the real quality of the love of adultery, a smell from hell was sensed by him, and it made him sick at the stomach. (Described in *Conjugal Love* 431.) He noted that just as worms and maggots cluster in smelly places, so evil spirits actually prefer what is dirty.

On the other hand, when he learned of the quality of true married love, he was touched with the fragrance of lovely flowers and gardens.

Something to think about

Here is a final thought for you.

“A sweet odor is not perceived by the nostrils while a foul stench clings to them.”
(Conjugal Love 439)

If a person was always close to bad smells, that person would miss the experience of delicate and beautiful aromas. Think about that for a while, because there is more of a lesson here than just a saying about smells.

Discuss the quote with your parents, and the many ways it could apply to our lives.