

Participant Study Guide Questions
The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality
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Questions for Chapter 8
Integrity: the Victory of the Risen Christ

The Nature of Integrity

1. How are virginity, celibacy and every form of chastity primarily to be understood?
Virginity, and every kind of chastity, whether before marriage, in marriage, or apart from marriage in some form of celibate life are to be seen primarily as anticipations and expressions of love. Such chastity is love preparing itself, love still in expectation of total fulfillment, whether through the mutual self-giving of human marriage or through that direct gift of one's self to Christ that is the spiritual analog of marriage. In either case, one is given to Him through His espousal to the Church, awaiting the wedding feast and final union with Him we all will have, please God, in heaven.
2. Explain how "chastity is the splendor of love"?
Chastity is the splendor of love because love can grow indefinitely thus, so can chastity. Chastity is the radiance that shines forth from charity in those who have made this love of God and man the absolutely primary thing in their life. As charity grows, its splendor too will grow. Neither has any limits save our own failures.
3. If "Christ's victory is our victory", why is it that we often feel oppressed, dragged down by our weakness, and enchained by sin?
Concupiscence, desire, and the heat of our passions seem to have made slaves of us again. One can give many reasons for this state of affairs: our need for desolation and temptation to purify us of our hidden pride; the necessity of aridity to strengthen our prayer and selflessness of service; our own careless forgetting of His victory.
4. What, according to theologians, is traditionally meant by the term "integrity" that belonged to Adam and Eve before the fall?
Before the fall, Adam was free of any need to fight to control his passions—he felt them only in a well-ordered and suitable manner, when it was appropriate and right to feel them, when his mind, enlightened by faith, made evident the circumstances that called for them. Eve shared this gift, traditionally called "integrity" by theologians.
5. Explain the sort of integrity that can be achieved even in our fallen state.
Even in our fallen state, if one is truly close to Christ, if one's union with Him in prayer has become habitual, then it is indeed possible to see the beauty of a woman or of a man with immediate, even subconscious, understanding of its relation to God, to appreciate fully the greatness of God's gift to this person, yet to be repelled at once by the evil involved in any suggestion of unchaste action or desire.

The Road to Integrity

6. Describe the similarity between the Scriptural account of Israel's wanderings and our efforts to be chaste.

When the People of Israel came out of Egypt, they had to wander through waterless deserts, they had to battle enemies, there were constant confusions and bewilderments as they found themselves in situations they did not understand. They learned day by day what God wished of them, yet they disobeyed, rebelled, and often yearned to go back to the familiar things of Egypt—and to slavery.

So it is with ourselves as we seek to become chaste, remain chaste, or gain a chaste integrity. The effort thrusts us quickly into a desert; battles soon follow. We find enemies we had not expected, within ourselves, in unforeseen situations, among our friends. There is a lot of confusion and bewilderment at the unfamiliar psychological terrain that opens consolingly in front of us. This is particularly true in these days when, within the Church, especially in the matter of sexuality, there is revolt and rebellion even among priests and bishops, like the revolts of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and the others who rose up against Moses.

7. What is the error that some priests and religious, or those trying to help others in sexual matters, often make? What does Scripture have to say about this matter?

They need to guard against the seemingly charitable thought that, since the road that one has followed oneself in gaining some degree of chastity has been extremely difficult, one should seek to avoid having any one else follow it.

Scripture would indicate that there is no possibility of avoiding an arduous journey. Given our fallen nature, we can be sure that no other road is better, and that most other roads will simply lead further into a wilderness where neither chastity nor integrity can ever be found but only arid desolation and fiery serpents.

8. What is most needed in order to achieve the chastity and integrity we desire? Explain the role of prayer, the example of St Joseph and Mary, spiritual reading and charity in this endeavor.

To achieve the chastity we desire, what is most needed is union in heart and mind with our Lord. Such conscious union is gained first of all through prayer. Prayer is our chief mode of conversation with Christ and His mother. St. Joseph is the patron of chastity for men and also the patron of prayer for all. If we, like Joseph, spend time with Mary and Jesus, chastity will quickly grow within us. Spiritual reading is also a great help. It gives us much to pray over and is an important way to learn the mind and heart of Jesus especially in our day when much in the environment (TV, music, film and other media) is diametrically opposed and hostile to what Christianity require of us in sexual matters.

But all these things are powerless and empty—even deceptive—without charity. One who desires chastity must have his whole life reoriented outwards towards other people, and away from himself so that he can live as the servant and the slave of all, even as Christ did, who came not to be served but to serve.

9. What role do the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist play in connection with charity?

The Eucharist is principally the sacrament of charity. It will give one greater grace to turn away from himself and toward others. One should receive the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist as often as he reasonably can, for they are the essential substance that feeds the life of Christ within us. But it is not good to eat heavily and never exercise. Without giving ourselves seriously

to the practice of fraternal charity, we will slowly grow flabby spiritually and eventually fall ill and die.

10. The secret of all genuine sexual relationships is **love**... It is a matter of leaving **childhood**, where a person is solely a recipient of his parents' love, and entering **adulthood**, where he is fit to be a parent—of his own children or God's—where he is capable of **giving love** even if he receives **little or no love in return**, giving his own love **constantly and firmly**, even as God gives. Since He gave His only-begotten Son to **suffer and die for all men**, so we must be willing to **suffer and die out of love**: to suffer and die for spouses and children, our own or others'—all of this for the sake of **that perfect union with God** which is our marriage with **the Lamb of God** in heaven forever.