

The Law of Self-Control

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



THE NINTH COMMANDMENT



1. The Ninth Commandment—"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife"—prohibits emotion, not action. God, in God's intelligence, knows this. So why does God care about an emotional feeling or thought we might have? What harm could it do? Why did our ancient forebears think God cares about what we contemplate within our own minds and hearts?
2. Coveting, the object of the Ninth Commandment, has long been understood as lust. But Sr. Joan broadens the definition of lust to include not just sexual desires but all desires that leave us continually wanting more. Is wanting more always destructive? Why are we commanded to forgo this source of motivation?
3. Think about this. Do you find yourself wanting to control the behavior of others? And if you do, and when you do, how are you doing at controlling yourself? What is so important about exercising self control? Why are we so often "at war" with ourselves about controlling our appetites and desires?
4. So, what if we said that the presence of the struggle for self control is God's gift? What sense could that make? Why does it seem so often that we can't have what we want? What is it that you want and why do you want it?