TIME OF GRACE

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS **OF COMMUNICATION**

1. **YOU SHALL NOT TRY TO "WIN."** If your goal is to win an argument, you will lose. Express how you truly feel with patience, gentleness, and self-control. If you both can do that, even if you don't agree just yet, you have won the day.

2. **YOU SHALL REPEAT YOUR SPOUSE'S POINT.** You don't have to agree with it. You aren't committing to any major changes just yet. You're just trying to prove that you understand what your beloved is saying and how they are feeling.

3. **YOU SHALL NOT INTERRUPT.** The point is to understand each other, not to dismiss each other's feelings.

4. **YOU SHALL STICK TO THE SUBJECT.** You must restrain yourself and deal with one thing at a time, namely, the subject your spouse brought up.

5. **YOU SHALL CLAIM YOUR CRAP.** If *crap* feels like an inappropriate word, then it was chosen wisely, since we sometimes do inappropriate things in marriage. The best couples claim their crap. Whatever percentage of the situation is yours to own, own it.

6. **YOU SHALL NOT TEXT AND TALK (OR STREAM OR GAME OR . . .).** Most communication is nonverbal, and trying to communicate anything is a bad idea when one or both of you are on screens. Communicating emotions requires your full attention and all the power of your nonverbals

7. **AVOID "ALWAYS," AND NEVER SAY "NEVER."** Take the humbler and more honest road by saying, "I'm feeling frustrated about this because this isn't the first time it has happened." This is a way for you to "[speak] the truth in love," as God commands (Ephesians 4:15).

8. **YOU SHALL PICK YOUR BATTLES.** There are times for honest, sit-down-and-hash-it-out conversations, but let them be few. And let your praise, encouragement, and support be many. Bite your tongue. Pick your battles. Because "love is patient" (1 Corinthians 13:4).

9. **YOU SHALL RESIST YOUR OCD (OBSESSIVE COMPARISON DISORDER).** If they have expressed a frustration to you, it is not the best moment to keep score, compare, and decide who is the better spouse. It's time to listen, grasp the heart of their frustration, and discover a workable solution to move forward.

10. **YOU SHALL TALK AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS.** The greatest thing about being a Christian couple is that Jesus is at the center of your marriage. His cross, which has more than enough forgiveness for your interruptions, defensiveness, and ugly arguments, casts its shadow of grace over your home.

Excerpt from the book Newlywed *by Pastor Mike Novotny. Click here to purchase the book.*