



Make an Examination of Conscience Based on the 10 Commandments

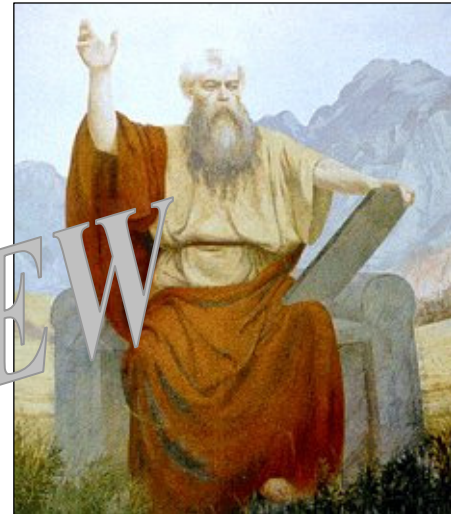
God's laws were made for our benefit! Our obedience opens us to receive more of God: more of His love, His help, His comfort, His healing, etc. This is why it's important to make a good examination of conscience. Use the following questions prayerfully. Identifying the sins you've committed, reflect on how they kept you from God's love. Then take these to the Sacrament of Reconciliation to receive God's forgiveness and mercy.

Ask God to help you change, but remember: God loves you right now, and so should you.

1. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not carve and worship idols.

God is constant and unchangeable, faithful and just, without any evil. He is almighty, merciful and infinitely good, always acting for my benefit.

- Have I failed to love God unconditionally, without reservation or distrust?
- When have I failed to accept His authority by trying to do things my way?
- Have I ignored the danger of influences that contradict God, on television, in movies, books, occult games, and unChristian people?
- Is money and material possessions my god? Do I trust these more than I trust God?
- Do I think God cannot forgive my sins? Or someone else's?
- Do I count on God's mercy so much that I expect Him to overlook my sins "because He understands" — as an excuse to keep sinning?
- Am I spiritually lazy or lukewarm in my faith?
- Have I failed to take time each day to pray, because it seems more important to spend my time on other activities?
- Am I unwilling to make sacrifices for God, such as going to Mass or other church activities, because I have "better" things to do?
- Do I try to manipulate my life through divination, magic, or other occult practices?



2. You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.

- Have I cursed? Do I use obscene language? Do any of my words dishonor God?
- Do I abuse Jesus' name by professing Him as my Lord while living as if I don't know Him?
- When someone else ridiculed God, did I refuse to stand up for Him?
- Do I believe He doesn't really care about me, my desires, and my problems? Of course He does care, but does my behavior show it?
- Have I used words to insult or hurt anyone? God calls each of us by name, thus everyone's name is sacred. When have I mocked someone's name or altered it to degrade that person?
- Have I named God to justify sinful activity (e.g., "God won't mind.")?
- Since God is truth, when have I blasphemed Him by lying?
- Have I broken promises that I made in God's name?

3. Keep holy the Sabbath Day.

- Have I missed Mass through my own fault, on Sundays or on Holy Days?
- Did I do work on the Lord's Day that could have been done another time?
- Do I take for granted Jesus' true presence in the Eucharist? Do I ignore the miracle of bread and wine becoming Jesus?
- During Mass, do I fail to reverence God, wearing lewd clothing, arriving late or leaving early without a holy reason, talking to others, or allowing myself to be easily distracted?
- Am I transformed by Jesus when I receive Him in the Word and in the Eucharist, or do I leave Mass the same as I came in?
- Have I neglected my obligation to go to Confession at least once a year?
- When have I failed to treat others as if they were Jesus Himself?
- Do I choose to get involved in leisure activities that are violent, sinful, or unloving?



4. Honor your father and mother.

- Have I disobeyed my parents or anyone else in authority? (Exception: We are not expected to obey the commands or demands of anyone when it causes us to sin.)
- Do I show them disrespect? Do I ignore their good desires?
- Have I neglected to express my gratitude to my parents for giving me life and love?
- Have I dishonored my parents or others in authority by saying unloving things about or to them? By insulting them? By arguing without trying to understand them?
- Have I failed to forgive them for everything that has hurt me?
- What about the other parents of my faith: godparents, pastors, catechists, teachers, siblings, friends, etc.? Have I dishonored them?
- Have I rejected family activities in order to hang out with my friends?

5. You shall not kill.

- Have I had an abortion or helped someone else get one? If I knew someone was planning to get an abortion, did I do nothing to protect the unborn child?
- 1 John 3:15 says, "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer." Whom have I hated by being unloving toward them?
- Have I killed my own spirit with self-hatred?
- When have I killed someone's self-esteem or dreams or spirit by hurting him or her?
- When have I killed someone in my heart because I thought he wouldn't do something my way?
- When have I insisted on winning an argument, wanting the other person to be a loser?
- When have I killed people by speaking unkindly about them?
- When have I directly or indirectly tempted someone to sin, thereby killing them spiritually?
- Do I smoke, take harmful drugs, drink too much alcohol, eat too much of the wrong foods, drive recklessly, or do anything else that unnecessarily risks my life or shortens it?
- Have I ever encouraged someone else to do these things?
- Do I carry in me envy, rage, jealousy, or any other feelings that are not life-giving?
- What have I done that has contributed to the killing of this planet's environment, when I could have avoided it?

6. You shall not commit adultery.

- When have I cheated on God by preferring other people or activities more than I love Him?
- When did I cheat on my boyfriend/girlfriend by behaving as if I'm more valuable or more worthy of attention than he or she is?
- Chastity means saving sex for my spouse so I can give myself fully to that person for the rest of my life. Have I given away this gift to someone I'm not married to?

- Have any of my romantic relationships failed to reflect to the world God's love?
- Have I acted on lustful thoughts or made sinful touches?
- Have I told obscene jokes?
- When did I allow my passions to control me, instead of using self-control for love of others under the guidance of God? This concerns sexual conduct, but it also relates to anger, spending money, being ruled by fear or impatience, etc.
- Have I worn immodest clothing in public, possibly tempting someone to sin?
- Have I read pornographic books or magazines? Or watched movies or TV shows that showed private sexual activities?
- If I am or if I know a homosexual person, am I failing to encourage chastity?



PREVIEW

7. You shall not steal.

- Have I stolen anything from a store or a friend's house or my parents money?
- Did I regret stealing something but fail to make restitution?
- When have I stolen time away from God by my spiritual laziness?
- When did I waste time at work, in school or at home, stealing time from work that I was responsible for?
- Am I stingy toward others? Am I stingy in my support of the Church and other worthy causes? Am I fearful that if I make donations, I won't have enough money to satisfy my own desires?
- Have I borrowed something and deliberately never returned it?
- Did I borrow something and return it in damaged condition without offering to fix or replace it?
- Have I participated in the theft of someone's property, or knowingly benefited from it?
- Have I copied CDs or videos or computer programs that I did not pay for?
- Did I ever gamble using money that should have been spent on something else?
- Have I copied from other people's homework or tests in school?

8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

- Have I made judgments about anyone, even though only God knows enough about that person to make such a judgment?
- When have I heard something bad about another person and assumed it was true?
- Do I refuse to give others the benefit of the doubt?
- Have I gossiped about others' faults and failings, making them look bad?
- Have I exaggerated information about someone in order to make myself seem better?
- How have I bragged to make myself look better than others?
- Did I reveal secrets that should have been kept confidential?
- Do I sound critical, negative or uncharitable when I talk?
- Have I violated someone's right to privacy by insisting on learning something I had no right to know? Did I spread this information to others?

9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

- Do I jealously wish I had relationships as good as someone else's?
- Do I let my imagination go uncontrolled? Do I fantasize impurely?
- Have I treated someone as an object of pleasure, rather than with dignity and respect?
- Have I used pornography or other pictures for the sake of lustful pleasure?
- Have I been lazy about purifying my heart and my thoughts?
- Have I sneaked peeks into people's privacy?
- When someone I know has violated the privacy or sexuality of others, have I ignored it as if it didn't really matter?
- Have I encouraged or condoned sexual permissiveness by promoting "safe sex" instead of abstinence?

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's property.

- Do I want more, more, more, instead of being content with what I have?
- Do I prefer earthly possessions more than the rewards God will have for me in heaven?
- Am I envious, moody or gloomy about what I don't have?
- Have I tried to obtain what others own through unjust or unloving means?
- Do I wish God had made me to be like somebody who's famous, because I think I'm not special enough for God to use me in something important?
- Do I wish I lived somewhere else, not appreciating where God has put me now?
- When have I turned my back on someone because I was jealous of that person?
- How much have I rejected God by wishing I had more than He's given me?
- Do I hate myself for my sinfulness? Am I unwilling to forgive myself? Am I jealous of those who seem holier than me? In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, I will be set free. God will forget my sins and help me to change!



Do you feel guilty reading this Explanation of Confession? Does it seem too difficult? Perhaps you feel some resentment and frustration, because the commandments are so imposing. Do the Ten Commandments make you feel afraid of God and fearful that he's going to punish you for failing to be perfect?

Discover the merciful side of God in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Discover, too, the power of God that you already have within yourself — the power to be holy because the Holy Spirit lives within you.

In the Old Testament, the Laws were imposed upon the people. God was an outside force who demanded obedience. Times have changed. We are a New Testament people. Jesus gave us his Holy Spirit so that the Laws would be written on our hearts. They come from within us, now.

Are you living an Old Testament or a New Testament life? Are you trying to obey God by following his rules, or are you relying on the Holy Spirit to increase your holiness from within?

When we rely on the Holy Spirit, we experience an inborn desire to be holy. The more we allow God's Spirit to spring up within us like refreshing waters that nourish our lives, the more natural it becomes for us to obey the Ten Commandments—without even thinking much about them!

Remember, it's impossible to convert from every sinful tendency all at once, no matter how much you desire it. Let the Holy Spirit transform you from within, and be patient with yourself. Purification is a process — sometimes a very long process. God loves you right now, and so should you!

To move away from the Old Testament mentality about the Ten Commandments and your fear of God as a punisher, grow now into a New Testament, love-filled relationship with the Holy Spirit! Release your own inner power to be holy, loving, and faithful! Learn to have a life in the Holy Spirit!

Merciful Act Of Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you, yet I should love you above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Thank you for helping me. Increase in me the gifts of your Holy Spirit so that I can become more holy. I pray this in the name of Jesus my Savior, Amen.

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