

## TWO KINDS OF SIN

In 1 John 5:16-17, we read about two kinds of sin, one that leads to spiritual death and one that does not. The non-deadly sin is venial sin; the deadly kind is mortal sin. Since it is a matter of spiritual life or death, it is important to know what is involved.

**Venial sin** involves matter that is less serious, or even if it is grave, one doesn't have full knowledge that it is a sin doesn't fully consent to the sin. Venial sin doesn't break the relationship with God, but it weakens love and can gradually lead us to rationalize committing a mortal sin. Venial sin is forgiven during every Mass, but should still be mentioned during Confession.

**Mortal sin** is deadly for our relationship with God; it breaks our relationship with him and deprives us of sanctifying grace. To be mortal, a sin must meet three criteria:

- ~ It must involve a serious matter (such as breaking one of the commandments or the moral teaching of the Church)
- ~ The person must have full knowledge that it is a sin
- ~ The person must commit it freely (i.e. in full possession of their mind, and no person or circumstance is forcing them)

To commit a mortal sin is, in essence, to abandon our relationship with God and the path that leads to Heaven. If one is sincerely sorry and willing to try not to commit the sin again, the normal way to receive forgiveness is through the confession of sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church – 1855-1864, 1874-1875)*

## Prayer before Confession

Come Holy Spirit into my soul. Enlighten my mind that I may know the sins I ought to confess, and grant me your grace to confess them fully, humbly, and with a contrite heart. Help me to firmly resolve not to commit them again.

O Blessed Virgin, Mother of my Redeemer, intercede for me through the Passion of your Son, that I may obtain the grace to make a good confession.

All you blessed Angels and Saints of God, pray for me, a sinner, that I may repent of my sins, and that my heart may be forever united with yours in eternal love.

Amen.

## How to Go to Confession

1. Greet the priest and make the Sign of the Cross. Indicate how long it has been since your last confession.
2. Confess your sins as well as you can.
3. The priest may visit with you about your sins and how to overcome them, then he will tell you your penance.
4. When you have finished confessing your sins, say an Act of Contrition (like the one on the next page).
5. The priest will then absolve you from your sins.
6. Thank the priest and leave the confessional.
7. Do the penance given to you by the priest and say a prayer of thanksgiving.

*Oh my God, I thank you for loving me.*

*I am sorry for all of my sins, for not loving others,  
and for not loving you.*

*Help me to live and love like Jesus,  
and not to sin again.*

*Amen.*

*It is good to make a habit of receiving the Sacrament of  
Reconciliation about once a month.*

In his mercy, he never tires of stretching out his hand to lift us up, to encourage us to continue our journey, to come back and tell him of our weakness, so that he can grant us his strength.

*Pope Francis  
Homily - October 13, 2013*



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## Preparing for The Sacrament of Reconciliation



*If we acknowledge our sins, he is  
faithful and just and will forgive our sins  
and cleanse us from every wrongdoing.*

*1 John 1:9*

## EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

**1st Commandment: I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange gods before me.**

Do I truly love God, think well of him, talk to him regularly, treat him as a loving friend and father? Do I believe he loves me personally? Do I thank him for the good things in my life? Do I blame him when things go wrong?

Do I sometimes give greater importance to things of this world: money, image, looks, clothes, popularity or selfish desires?

Do I claim to have good values, but often bend or abandon them in order to fit in and be “part of the group”? Do I make fun of others who try to follow God?

Have I tried to bypass God’s guidance in my life by going to psychics, tarot card readers, mediums or fortune tellers? Have I engaged in occult practices, used Ouija boards, or been involved with the occult?

**2nd Commandment: You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.**

Do I show disrespect for God’s name by misusing it out of frustration or anger or to look “cool” to others? Do I treat His name casually by saying, “Oh my God” or “Jesus” as exclamations? Do I curse, swear, use bad language or jokes?

Do I hesitate to mention God’s name in appropriate situations, when I talk with friends and family members? Do I pretend to be very religious when it’s likely to make me look good?

**3rd Commandment: Keep holy the Lord’s Day.**

Do I come to Church to celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays and Holy Days or only when it is convenient or when it will make me “feel good”? Do I participate in the Mass by praying and singing?

Do I pay close attention to the Word of God and open myself to allow His word to take effect in my life? Do I acknowledge the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist and am I careful to receive it with a clean conscience? Have I deliberately concealed anything in confession? Do I do unnecessary work on Sunday?

**4th Commandment: Honor your father and your mother.**

Do I love, respect and obey my parents? Do I appreciate the many sacrifices they make for me?

Is there anyone in my family whom I need to forgive who has hurt me or not been there for me when I needed them?

Do I help bring peace and happiness to my family, or am I disrespectful of others and a source of hurt and division for those who are closest to me?

Do I help at home? How do I treat my brothers and sisters?

Do I listen to my parents’ reasoning when they say “no” to me?

Do I respect lawful authority, such as teachers and police?

**5th Commandment: You shall not kill.**

Have I caused grievous bodily harm or death to anyone? Have I been violent or abusive either in action or in speech? Do I ignore people in my presence while texting or playing with my phone, or isolating myself with iPod and earphones?

Have I injured another person through carelessness or fighting?

Do I treat myself with respect? Have I placed others or myself in danger because of irresponsible use of alcohol or other drugs?

Have I caused problems for others or myself due to their use? Do I drive recklessly, endangering others or myself?

Have I had an abortion or encouraged others to do so? Have I encouraged, or condoned sterilization, or had myself sterilized?

Have I forgiven those who have hurt me, or am I holding on to resentment or desire for revenge?

Do I use my power of influence well, in order to oppose terrorism, war, oppression, abortion and injustice, or do I allow those evils to continue by my apathy and my silence?

Do I support the life and mission of the Church by sharing my time and talents?

**6th Commandment: You shall not commit adultery.**

Have I engaged in any sexual activity outside of marriage? Have I been faithful to my marriage vows in thought and action?

Have I used contraception or artificial birth control? Have I practiced masturbation? Encouraged or practiced surrogacy?

Have I entertained sexual fantasies? Do I read or view pornography? Do I treat members of the opposite sex as objects for my own use or pleasure?

Have I engaged in homosexual activity?

Do I practice modesty in the way that I dress?

**7th Commandment: You shall not steal.**

Have I stolen what was not mine? Have I returned or made restitution for anything I have stolen?

Do I waste time at work or school? Have I cheated on tests or homework?

Do I gamble excessively, thereby denying the needs of others?

Do I pay my debts promptly? Do I seek to share what I have with the poor?

**8th Commandment: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**

Have I lied? Have I made the sins of others public? Have I engaged in gossip? Am I critical, negative, or uncharitable in my thoughts of others? Do I keep secret what should be kept confidential?

**9th Commandment: You shall not desire your neighbor’s spouse.**

Have I entertained impure sexual fantasies? Have I caused them by what I read or watch on TV, in movies or on the internet? Do I engage in conversation about sex in a casual or impure way that undermines the dignity and holiness of human sexuality? Do I pray for grace to help me with temptation?

**10th Commandment: You shall not desire your neighbor’s goods.**

Am I jealous of what other people have? Am I greedy or selfish? Is my whole life organized around gaining or keeping material possessions?

Do I trust that God will look after all of my material or spiritual needs?