

AN ANGLICAN PRIMER ON  
**CONFESSION**



BY A PRIEST IN THE ACNA

## C O N T E N T S

1. SETTING ASIDE WRONG IDEAS 3
2. WHAT IS CONFESSION? 4
3. WHY WOULD ONE UTILIZE CONFESSION? 8
4. HOW DOES ONE MAKE CONFESSION, PRACTICALLY? 12
5. PREPARING FOR CONFESSION 16
6. A SELF-EXAMINATION 19

## PART I: SETTING ASIDE WRONG IDEAS

The idea of “Confession” carries with it all sorts of strange ideas. Visions of cold wooden booths, Roman Catholic priests handing out “Our Fathers”, and an all-around mechanical vision of the Christian Life. Now, perhaps once upon a time, in a decadent era of the Late Middle Ages, these ideas about confession might have been founded. But it is certainly not so in general. For long ages Confession (or as it is more formally known, ‘The Sacrament of Penance’) has been a marvelous means of imparting God’s love and forgiveness to his faithful people. It has been a source of medicine to the sick, a breaker of pride, and a bastion of grace to countless millions of Christian souls. But as a sacramental practice its use – within and outside of the Roman Catholic church – has waned in the last century, indeed, it has almost fallen into dis-use. This is a great loss to the people of God. This little tract shall be an exploration of, and an encouragement towards, making confession. I hope that with the knowledge herein, the reader will come to see the power of its right use, and have a clear sense of *how* he or she might come to utilize this great gift God has given to the Church.

## PART II: WHAT CONFESSION IS

The Anglican Catechism states: After repenting and confessing my sins to God in the presence of a priest, the priest declares God's forgiveness to me with authority given by God.

*(To Be A Christian, Q. 120)*

There's a lot of important detail in that sentence that is worth unpacking. First, note that confession is always to God, primarily. The priest is there not as an agent unto himself, but as an ambassador of the Son of God (2 Cor 5:20). His presence is, sacramentally, God's presence. Who the priest is, as a person, is irrelevant to the matter. Second, note that the forgiveness that is granted is *God's* forgiveness. The scriptures are clear: God is the only one who has the power to forgive sins (Luke 5:21 // Mark 2:7). But God operates in several ways: By his Spirit alone, through his ministering Angels, through his people who are indwelt by his Spirit, and for certain functions, especially through his appointed ministers. So, even though God alone is the only one capable, himself, of forgiving sins, nevertheless, the Twelve are given the ability to do the same: "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld." – John 20:23 Which seems to have been a specific application of the power already imparted, as recorded by Matthew (18:18): "Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This ministry that our Lord bestowed on the Apostles was handed

down to their successors, the bishops. And bishops, being guided by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, have appointed the priests that are under them to also exercise this ministry. This is the “authority given by God” that the Anglican Catechism is speaking of: It is authority that has its source in God, as the forgiver of sins, and its origin, in Jesus’ giving of the authority to the Apostles, who have in turn handed it down to the priests of today. This was the teaching of the very early church, as seen in the following patristic quotations:

Christ has given to his priests a power he would not grant to the angels, for he has not said to them, ‘Whatsoever ye bind, will be bound,’...The Father hath given all judgment into the hands of his Son, and the Son in turn has granted this power to his priests.

— St. John Chrysostom (349-407)  
*On the Priesthood*

[Heretics] professed to show reverence for the Lord by reserving to Him alone the power of forgiving sins. Greater wrong could not be done than what they do in seeking to rescind His commands and fling back the office He bestowed. . . . The Church obeys Him in both respects, by binding sin and by loosing it; for the Lord willed that for both the power should be equal...It seemed impossible that sins should be forgiven through penance; Christ granted this (power) to the Apostles and from the Apostles it has been transmitted to the office of

priests...

God makes no distinction; He promised mercy to all and to His priests He granted the authority to pardon without any exception

—St. Ambrose (337-397),

*On Repentance*

This (forgiving sins), you say, only God can do. Quite true: but what He does through His priests is the doing of His own power

—St. Pacian

*First Letter to Symrponius*

(It is appropriate to note that sacramental confession to a priest was carried out in a more corporate, public setting in the early centuries, and that it was over the course of time, and for pastoral reasons, that it became a private, individual rite.)

This very doctrine of the early church is contained within the Anglican rite for the ordination of priests, which includes the prayer:

“Receive the Holy Spirit for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed to you by the Imposition of our Hands. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven. If you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld.”

So we see that, based on Scripture, the practice of confessing to a priest, who functions with power given by God, has had consistent use throughout all ages, and in all places, including within our own Anglican branch. But, should you, dear reader, utilize

this great tool of the Church? While the Roman Catholic is bound by duty to go to Confession, the Anglican church has never made it a requirement for Christian souls. Partly because the Anglican church is committed to not requiring anything for salvation that the Scripture does not make plain to be necessary for salvation – and Confession is not at that level. On the contrary, the famous Anglican maxim about confession “All can, some should, none must.” has guided the use of the rite in our church. And this freedom – to utilize confession or not – is given because Confession is a gift to the Christian soul. And like all good gifts, it would lose its sweetness if it were forced upon God’s children. That is not God’s way with any of his gracious gifts.

But what exactly is this gift? The gift God gives through his ordained ministers in the rite of sacramental confession is Absolution. But what is this? What is Absolution? Absolution is a pre-emptive pronouncement, with the very seal of God himself, of the pronouncement we shall hear on the Great Judgment Day at the end of time. To confess a particular sin, with a sincere and contrite heart, and to receive absolution from a priest for that sin, is to be given a pledge of God’s total forgiveness of that sin. That when the books are brought out on judgment day (Revelation 20:12), and all our deeds in this life are present to God and the audience of heaven, the particular sins which received absolution will have already received their judgment: It is forgiven! The knowledge, especially for our most

grievous sins, that we can be certain of God's mercy, is a great comfort to the troubled soul. This is the first gift that comes with absolution. And a second is like it: Absolution effectively removes the obstacles that we place between us and God, blocking our friendship with him. It sets us back into a relationship that is fully in the light. This too, is an infinite mercy, and often provides a torrent of spiritual relief to the one confessing.

Even though this gift might sound great to you, perhaps you are still undecided in your own case; whether confession might be worth a try, or perhaps you think it might not be for you. As well as the gift of Absolution, there are many other reasons that confession is good for the soul; things that God has bult into this ministry that are most useful for discipleship. Allow me to unpack these.

### PART III: WHY ONE WOULD DO IT

Chiefly, it is “worth” going to confession because it is a concrete, practical way of having your particular sins washed white in the blood of Jesus. It is a means of connecting Jesus' sacrifice of himself on Golgotha with your own life, twenty centuries or so later. But, as well as receiving a literal absolution and pardon from your sins, there are four additional tremendous benefits for the Christian soul that result from going to confession:



- I. It helps in taking sin seriously
- II. It cuts through self-deception
- III. It is a balm to the troubled conscience
- IV. It is a means of getting help to resist besetting temptations

These four reasons are brought forward in the Exhortation that is assigned to be occasionally read before Communion in Anglican Churches, which heartily affirms Confession as a most beneficial Anglican practice.

“Examine your lives and conduct by the rule of God’s commandments, that you may perceive wherein you have offended in what you have done or left undone, whether in thought, word, or deed. And acknowledge your sins before Almighty God, with full purpose of amendment of life, being ready to make restitution for all injuries and wrongs done by you to others... And if, in your preparation, you need help and counsel, then go and open your grief to a discreet and understanding priest, and confess your sins, that you may receive the benefit of absolution, and spiritual counsel and advice; to the removal of scruple and doubt, the assurance of pardon, and the strengthening of your faith.”

—*The Exhortation in Preparation for Communion,*  
*Book of Common Prayer*

The great Anglican priest John Keble once remarked that under the extreme Protestant position, where Confession to a priest is rejected from Church

practice, that “every man is his own absolver”. Which means, without the practice of Confession, we instead take it upon ourselves to assure ourselves of forgiveness. The trouble with this is threefold.

In the first place, our flesh inclines us to go easy on our selves and our sin. We will by nature shy away from squaring up face-to-face with the real horror that our sins are, and how far from the mark of God’s glory they really come. Having to actually name one’s sins to a priest forces oneself to not just dismiss one’s sins, but to really and truly own up to them, and see them for what they are.

In the second place, our imperfections lead us to not properly even notice what is sin and what is not, so it is possible to wallow in certain sins in complete ignorance of the fact. Preparation for Confession, which involves self-examination based on God’s laws is a way of holding all of our life up into the light of God, to be exposed, and seen for what it is. Many people who utilize confession will tell you that there have been many occasions where the Holy Spirit during self-examination brought to light sins that they were not even aware of beforehand.

In the third place, we are not all that good of convincing ourselves of things that we are not already convinced by. God’s forgiveness in Jesus Christ can be a hard thing to really believe when one has sinned grievously. Sometimes one’s faith just can’t surmount one’s guilty conscience. And for this reason, trying

to be one's own absolver doesn't actually bring the peace of mind that only Christ can deliver. Instead – hearing someone else – a priest – declare that Christ really and truly forgives you for those very sins which you have named helps immensely in trying to believe it. It's no longer just a case of convincing yourself, but now you have the words and testimony of a spiritual father to back it up. And when the devil plays on your guilty conscience – bringing to mind the shame of past sins – the Christian who has been to confession can say “Yes, I did those things. And I have been forgiven by Jesus Christ, by the blood he shed for me, and don't just take my word for it – my priest told me so as well!”

Most of these reasons could similarly be applied to confessing one's sin to any fellow Christian as well. However, there is additional reason why it is good to go to a priest, and not just to any fellow Christian. Besides the fact that the power of binding and loosing that was given to the Apostles has always been interpreted as being a unique gift to be exercised by the ordained ministers of the Church, it is eminently reasonable that a priest is a good person to confess to. By way of analogy – consider the case of when you have a physical illness. Do you go to a friend who has had a similar illness, or do you go to the doctor? You go to the doctor, of course, because he has an objective, dispassionate, detailed knowledge of such things, and will be able to offer you the best advice toward getting well. It is the same situation with spiritual illness, that is, with sin. While sin is a

common ailment, the priest who is a confessor has been uniquely trained in diagnosing the scope of infections, and should know of the remedies that will help the Christian soul get back on to the way of righteousness.

Hopefully by now, you have, dear Reader, been convinced of the legitimacy and benefits of making Confession to a priest. If this is so, you may be wondering about the particulars; how exactly one goes about doing it?

#### PART IV: HOW TO MAKE CONFESSION

There are three parts of Confession:

- (I) Preparation,
- (II) The Confession,
- (III) Penance.

##### (I) Preparation

If one has fallen into a particular sin which is weighing one's soul down, then the preparation part is very easy. Since the sin is already recognized as ruinous, and the soul is already in need of help, there is no further preparation needed. It is good to get to Confession as soon as possible. For those who don't have one particular sin burdening their conscience, but who would like to utilize Confession more generally – then part one involves a self-examination

(see the final section of this tract). The self-examination should be done thoughtfully and prayerfully. It should take a good amount of time: at least a half an hour, if not quite a bit more. It is best to be done with pen and paper – to keep track of the sins the Holy Spirit shines light on, in order to confess them. (If it is one’s first time ever making a Confession, then the list may be very long indeed, and that is OK! it also might be useful to divide your life into eras – teenage years, early adulthood, etc. – and to think through each era individually.) When the self-examination is complete, take a good long look at the list of sins on the piece of paper. It is not unusual to feel something like grief or even despair about how much we have sinned. Make an appointment to hear Confession on the next day: To sit with a knowledge of the guilt of sin for a day, to allow the soul to truly be repulsed by them; steeling the conviction to not return “like a dog to its vomit”.

## (II) Confession

The priest will meet you and accompany you into the Church (If there is a confessional-booth in the church, he may already be there). Kneeling at the Communion rail, the priest will take a seat beside the communion rail, and will hand you a book with the following text (or something very similar):

*The Penitent begins:* Bless me, for I have sinned.

*The Priest says*

The Lord be in your heart and upon your lips that

you may truly and humbly confess your sins: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Penitent:* I confess to Almighty God, to his Church, and to you, that I have sinned by my own fault in thought, word, and deed, in things done and left undone; especially [since my last confession, which was \_\_\_\_\_ ago]\_\_\_\_\_. For these and all other sins which I cannot now remember, I am truly sorry. I pray God to have mercy on me. I firmly intend amendment of life, and I humbly beg forgiveness of God and his Church, and ask you for counsel, direction, and absolution.

*Here the Priest may offer counsel, direction, and comfort.*

*The Priest then pronounces this absolution*

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive you all your offenses; and by his authority committed to me, I absolve you from all your sins: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*The Priest adds*

The Lord has put away all your sins.

*Penitent:* Thanks be to God.

*The Priest concludes:*

Go in peace, and pray for me, a sinner.

That's it.

That's the whole rite.

A few notes are in order:

At the place where there is a blank (\_\_\_\_\_), that is the place where one confesses either the sin that is on their conscience, or the list of sins brought to light during previous self-examination.

At the place indicated, the Priest will offer some suggestions on how to avoid the most dangerous sins within the confession, and can answer questions you may have about the struggle with temptation. This is where confession to a priest can prove more useful than simply confessing sins to a fellow Christian (as the Scripture also exhorts us to: confess your sins to one another [James 5:16]). In the same way that we go to a Medical Doctor when we have a physical ailment, and not just to our next-door neighbor, just so it is wise and useful to disclose one's sins to a priest, who is knowledgeable about the matters of the soul and salvation.

### (III) Penance

The priest will almost always assign some sort of penance. The penance will often be a prayer of some kind, but may be a religious act of some kind or another. Penance is NOT a payment to God for our sins – the only payment that could be made was made by our Lord Jesus Christ, twenty centuries ago on the cross. No, the “penance” is simply an act which reveals one's commitment to repentance, and one's obedience to God and his ways. It is important to do the penance as soon as possible after the confession, so that it doesn't get forgotten. Either in the pews of

the Church, after making confession, or once you get home.

When the rite is over, and it is time to leave the station for confession, it is good to stay in the Church for a little while, if possible. To do any assigned penance, and to thank God for his infinite mercies.

#### V. PREPARING FOR CONFESSION:

**T**here have been many manuals containing self-examination. Any of them may be useful to you. However, as the times change, so does the landscape of sin, interior and exterior. Thus it is useful to have a self-examination that is up to date (for instance, the question of “have I been fair to my servants” doesn’t have much relevance today! Etc.) To that end, below is one that you can use. It is important to do the self-examination in the right Spirit: Remembering that you are looking for sins in your life so that you can bring them before God to be forgiven. NOT to be condemned. Do not be troubled if you cannot remember every sin that you believe you have done. However, it is equally important that you do not try and conceal any sins in your confession. The act of hiding a sin is very detrimental to the soul, because then the sin can fester, rather than be healed. Moreover, it is an act of self-deception, for the Living God sees and knows everything: every thought and deed. He is already aware of the sin, and it will be brought up on judgment day, if it has not



already been dealt with by repentance and turning to Christ. If you feel ashamed to mention a specific sin in Confession – take courage! Not only does God already know, and is already offering his forgiveness to you, but there is very little your priest has not already heard in the confessional. He will not be shocked by the sin, however grievous. That said, it is a good thing to be ashamed of our sins, because they truly are bad, and we should feel as much. But there is tremendous benefit in naming them out loud to a priest, because then you know that just as the priest has heard it, and still proclaims Christ’s forgiveness in his absolution, so Christ himself, when you see him face to face at the Judgment seat, will also forgive you.

*This is a good prayer to be said before self-examination:*

O Holy Spirit, Source of all light, Spirit of wisdom, of understanding, and of knowledge, come to my assistance and enable me to make a good confession. Enlighten me, and help me now to know my sins as one day I shall be forced to recognize them before thy judgment seat. Bring to my mind the evil which I have done and the good which I have neglected. Permit me not to be blinded by self-love. Grant me, moreover, heartfelt sorrow for my transgressions, knowing how deeply they have wounded the living Heart of my Heavenly Father; and help me to make a good confession that all stain of guilt may be washed away in the Precious Blood of my Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

*—from the St. Augustine Prayer Book*

Try and be as practical as you can in making your list of sins in preparation for confession. To think concretely. To think about what several sins may have been involved in a single act. Be sure to distinguish *proclivities* and *temptations* to sin, from actual acts of sin (acts which may be mental or physical). If there is ambiguity, feel free to raise that ambiguity with the confessor by letting him know you are not sure if a sin has been committed.

One final note, when compiling a list of one's sins, it is useful to try and name about how many times (since your last confession, or, if it is your first confession: In your whole life) a specific sin has been committed. This way you can see for yourself which pits you are prone to falling into, and also consider what things in your life could be changed to help try and avoid these sins. Furthermore, it is an additional act of humility to recognize and name just how much one has been sinning, and is a sinner. It hurts a little, but, it is good for your soul. Trust the wisdom of the Ancient Church on this, and trust in the mercy of our Lord Jesus who is always ready to forgive us, when we turn to him.

SELF-EXAMINATION BASED ON THE  
TEN COMMANDMENTS

*Pause at each question, and ask yourself if you have sinned against God in that way.*

*First Commandment:*

**Have no other gods but the LORD**

Have you prayed to any god other than the God revealed in the Christian Scriptures who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Have you worshiped alongside non-Christians?

Loved any thing more than God?

Loved any person more than God?

Feared the opinions of people, more than the opinion of God?

Neglected God in daily life?

Denied God in the presence of other people?

Concealed my faith?

Made light of my sin?

Made light of the sins of others?

Refused to believe the agreed-upon basic teaching of the Church?

Neglected opportunities to be instructed in the Faith?

Followed your own will when God showed me other wise?

Followed your own will when another asked something of you instead?

Complained that God has neglected or been too harsh with you?

Despaired of salvation in Jesus?

Refused to admit your faults before God?

Disbelieved in forgiveness?

Failed to forgive another?

Been satisfied with religious feelings and religious practice, rather than true worship?

Attempted to bribe or placate God?

Engaged in superstitious behavior?

Consulted mediums, palm-readers, horoscopes, etc?

Have you put your hope in “luck”?

*Second Commandment:*

### **Worship no Idols**

Have you honored the idols of other religions: Statues of the buddha, etc.

Have you treated Christian objects (crosses, shrines, images, etc.) in a superstitious way? As if they had power in and of themselves, rather than seeking the Living God for the power that comes from him alone?

Sought the good favor of the saints instead of appealing to Christ Jesus for his mercy alone?

Believed in any doctrine contrary to the teaching of historic Christianity?

### THE IDOL OF MAMMON

Been excited by money? Worried about money?

Devoted too much attention to money matters?

### THE IDOL OF THE FLESH

Been excited by worldly honor, admiration or prestige?

Sought my own pleasure as an end in itself?

Sought to cushion my life in luxury? or been Gluttonous?

Been dainty, or self-indulgent in food or dress?

Gotten drunk? (enough alcohol to be unable to pray – anything more than 2 drinks in one setting would be good to question oneself about)

Used drugs (legal or illegal) that alter the senses or one's mood?

Too much concern over your appearance or dress?  
Deliberate slovenliness?  
Been cowardly in sickness?  
Spoken with vanity to others about your own life or possessions?  
Been snobbish and superior about race, education, class, title, etc.?

THE IDOL OF SELF

Been self-reliant in daily life?  
Relied on self for your own moral reform?  
Been self-righteous before God? Been self-righteous before others?  
Paraded your Christian practices in front of others?  
Boasted? Exaggerated?  
Drawn attention to ones' self? Talked too much?  
Offered your own opinions without being asked?  
Relished compliments?  
Been anxious about your life?  
Been quick to take offense from others?  
Been argumentative?  
Refused to apologize when in the wrong?

Avoided duties that are part of your station in life? (As a parent, child, spouse, worker?)  
Indulged self-pity?  
Been afraid of death?  
Disobeyed the laws of the Land?  
Betrayed the trust of another?  
Tried to assert your authority over another?

*Third Commandment:*

**Do not take the Lord's name in vain**

Have you used God's name flippantly, in any context other than an address of prayer (e.g. "Oh my God!" or "My Lord!" or "Jesus!" as an exclamation of surprise or anger?)

Have you taken an oath in the name of God rashly?  
Have you sworn to something that is sinful or untrue?  
Have you violated any oaths you have made?  
Broken the vows made at your baptism? Or confirmation? Holy Orders? Or marriage?  
Have you claimed God's will as your reason for doing something selfish or wicked?  
Studied theology for the wrong reasons (to win an argument, etc.)?  
Deliberately concealed a sin in confession?  
Neglected duty to family in the name of Church work?

*Fourth Commandment:*

**Keep the Sabbath day holy**

Omitted to attend Church when able?  
Been absent-minded when in Church?  
Gone for entertainment or sports instead of Church?  
Omitted to set aside a portion of each day for prayer?  
Failed to do penances previously given?  
Failed to take some rest from work on one day in seven?  
Put off work until Sunday that reasonably could have been done beforehand?  
Failed to set aside any time for godly rest and recreation?  
Sacrificed sleep in order to obtain wealth?  
Not honored the fast days of the church (Ash Wednesday and Good Friday)?  
Honored worldly festivals more than God's festivals (e.g. Shopping instead of reflecting on the Incarnation during the Christmas season, etc.)  
Dishonored holy feasts by drunkenness or gluttony?

*Fifth Commandment:*

**Honor father and mother**

If you are still under their charge: have you obeyed your

mother and father in all things not clearly contrary to God's will?

If you are not under their charge: Have you still sought to honor them?

Have you brought shame or scandal to them by immoral actions?

Have you attended to the needs of your parents in old age?

Have you been respectful to those God has placed over you?

Have you deceived those over you? Have you spoken ill of them?

Have you honored the clergy, especially those in the church you attend?

Have you spoken ill of them to others in the congregation?

Have you ever deserted a woman that you got pregnant?

Have you neglected your duties as a father and mother?

Have you behaved more as a confidant than a parent to your child?

Neglected to discipline children?

Neglected to teach children (or those in your care) about God and his saving work in Jesus Christ, and his great love for us?

Have you left the moral instruction of your child entirely to others (school, church, etc.?)

Neglected to provide for the reasonable needs and wishes of your spouse?

Spoken maliciously of government officials?

*Sixth Commandment:*

**Do not murder**

Murdered another?

Had an abortion? Encouraged another to get an abortion?

Encouraged any form of euthanasia for the elderly?

Desired your own death?

Abused anyone? (Verbally, Physically, or otherwise?)

Been too harsh in disciplining a child?  
Gotten into physical fights? Used violent language or threats?  
Indulged violent thoughts about someone?  
Driven a vehicle recklessly?  
Been nit-picky with family members? Been quarrelsome?  
Hated anyone? Cursed anyone? Been angry at anyone without a cause?  
Been irritable? Insulted anyone? Gossiped?  
Ruined another's reputation unjustly?  
Harbored a grudge against anyone?  
Been revengeful?  
Set a sinful example for someone, that led them into sin?  
Been cruel to animals?

*Seventh Commandment:*

**Do not commit adultery**

Had sex before marriage?  
Had sex with anyone besides your spouse after marriage?  
Engaged in any sexually-arousing activity before or outside of marriage?  
Within the context of marriage:  
Have you ever sought sex for your pleasure alone, without considering the needs and desires of your spouse?  
Have you ever been forceful in obtaining sex from your spouse?  
Used sex as a means to getting one's own ends?  
Have you ever done anything un-natural or violent in your sexual life with your spouse?  
Looked at pornography? Read lewd novels?  
Indulged sexual fantasies in your mind?  
Gone to any restaurants, venues, or dances in order to be aroused?  
Touched yourself impurely



Sought to arouse any one besides your spouse?  
Encouraged any one else toward adultery?  
Stared at someone's body in public?  
Told dirty jokes? Laughed at dirty jokes?  
Watched movies or television shows with the secret intention of being aroused by them?  
Been immodest in conversation?  
Been prudish by speaking of all sexuality as "evil" or "unclean"?  
Prevented the bringing forth of children for selfish motives?

*Eighth Commandment:*

**Do not steal**

Stolen anything from a store?  
Taken something without asking that did not belong to you?  
Failed to return something that was borrowed?  
Downloaded pirated software, music, movies, etc.  
Bought pirated movies, music, etc.  
Shared in goods that you know were stolen by someone else?  
Taken on more debt than was wise in light of your income?  
Deliberately dodged debts? Cheated in business? Cheated on your taxes?  
Been stingy?  
Found anything of value and not sought to locate its rightful owner?  
Done personal things while "on the clock" at work?  
Written off as business expenses what really weren't so?  
Wasted time generally?  
Violated a business contract? Wasted natural resources?  
Spent too much money on things of no eternal value?  
Destroyed the property of others?

Marked up the price of goods or services more than is fair?  
Been overly exacting in others' repayment of their debts to you?  
Failed to give some money, time, or services to the care of the poor?  
Been begrudging when doing so?

*Ninth Commandment:*

**Do not bear false witness**

Spoken ill of someone to another? Been two-faced?  
Been over eager to believe ill of someone?  
Lied about something? Concealed the truth?  
Lied about someone else? Lied about your self?  
Lied about something you did?  
Lied about your abilities, experiences, talents, etc.  
Spoken one thing to others, but done otherwise yourself?  
Been harsh toward others for sins that you have also committed?  
Told secrets that others had trusted you with?

*Tenth Commandment:*

**Do not covet**

Neglected to give thanks to God for what he has given?  
Been jealous of others for what they have?  
Been bitter about the good fortune of others?  
Been glad when someone else has failed?  
Gloated over another? Shown favoritism?  
Been dis-satisfied with the station God has placed you in?  
Desired more ease and enjoyment from life?  
Gambled more money than you could afford to lose?  
Sought one's entertainment chiefly in gambling?  
Played the lottery out of distrust that God will provide for your needs?

C O N F E S S I O N

Surrendered to feelings of depression and gloom?  
Used another as means of gain for oneself?  
Lived beyond one's means in order to "keep up with the Joneses"?  
Not given a portion of one's wages to Church and charity?  
Been uncooperative so as to spoil another's plans?  
Paid employees fairly?  
Obstructed the justice system?

PRAYER THAT CAN BE USED AFTER SELF-EXAMINATION:

O my God, how great are my sins!  
I wish that I had never offended your glory in these ways. Give me a true sorrow and a contrite heart for my many sins. Help me to make a true confession to your priest, so that I may receive perfect remission of my sins, by the merit and power of Jesus Christ, who gave himself up as an offering and a sacrifice for them.  
Amen.

