

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

(A Guide in Preparation for Confession)

Last week our text brought up the question for discussion, "List ways we dishonor the Holy Spirit dwelling in us." I explained to our class that God's Law and Truth is not an arbitrary set of "do's and don'ts" that God made to test our faithfulness. Instead, God's Law and Truth is a reflection of the very way He has created us and all of creation. To be truly happy, to live in reality, we turn to God's liberating & life-giving Truth. This might be a helpful time to use this short, Orthodox, youth-friendly summary of the Ten Commandments.

I. "I am the Lord your God, and you shall have no other gods before me." (Give God His Glory)

Has God been the source, center and hope of my life? Have I put myself, others or things before God? Have I failed to trust in God's existence, love and mercy? Have I failed to pray to God, to worship Him and to thank Him for His blessings? Have I tried to serve God and keep His commandments faithfully? Have I murmured or complained against God in adversity? Have I praised and glorified God through my words and deeds?

II. "You shall not make for yourself a graven image in order to worship it." (Worship God Alone)

Have I valued anyone or anything above God? Have I given to anyone or anything the love, honor and worship that belongs to God alone? Have I made an idol of any person, idea, occupation, or thing?

III. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain." (Respect What Is Holy)

Have I blasphemed God's holy name in any way? Have I sworn a false oath? Have I broken any solemn vow or promise? Have I entered into an agreement, promise or contract against God's law? Have I cursed or used foul language? Do I speak of God to other people? Have I spoken negatively about the church or the clergy with others?

IV. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." (The Lord's Day Is For God)

Have I worshiped regularly on Sundays and major feast days and have I helped others to do the same? Do I come regularly late to the holy services? Does my attention wander during church? Have I worked unnecessarily on Sundays or major feast days or caused others to do so? Have I spent the Lord's Day in a wholesome and edifying ways? Do I use my time wisely or do I waste a lot of it? Have I contributed a sacrificial share of my time, talent and treasure to the church? Have I discouraged others from attending church or participating in the sacraments? Have I kept the prescribed fasts of the church?

V. “Honor your father and mother.” (Respect Your Parents)

Have I loved and respected my parents as I should? Have I neglected them or failed to help them? Have I disobeyed them, deceived them or caused them pain by my words or deeds? Have I treated all my family members with patience and love? Have I neglected my children? Have I disrespected any member of the clergy?

VI. “Thou shall not kill.” (Respect Life and Do Not Murder)

Have I caused the harm, injury or death of anyone? Have I wished my own or anyone’s harm or death? Have I been cruel to animals or destroyed any life unnecessarily? Have I spoke badly about other people or harmed the self-esteem of others? Have I done things that are harmful to my own body such as excessive eating, drinking, smoking, drug abuse? Have I tried to prematurely end my life? Have I had an abortion?

VII. “You shall not commit adultery.” (Sex Is for Marriage & between Man and Woman)

Have I committed any immoral acts alone or with others? Have I caused others to commit immoral acts? Have I committed immoral acts in my heart? Have I honored my spouse? Have I been faithful to my spouse? Have I read or viewed inappropriate materials?

VIII. “You shall not steal.” (Don’t Take What Is Not Yours)

Have I taken anything that was not mine from anyone or from anywhere? Have I cheated anyone? Have I caused others to steal or cheat? Have I tried to find the owners of lost things I have found? Have I damaged or destroyed anything that belonged to another? Have I defrauded anyone of rightful wages? Have I paid my debts? Have I given to the poor and to philanthropic causes in proportion to my means?

IX. “You shall not bear false witness.” (Don’t Lie)

Have I given false testimony against anyone? Have I spoken evil, told lies or spread rumors about anyone? Have I disclosed to anyone the sins and faults of another? Have I made careless statements or done anything else to harm the name and reputation of another? Have I engaged in idle gossip?

X. “You shall not covet.” (Don’t Desire What Others Have)

Have I looked with envy jealousy or hatred toward the possession talents or achievements of others? Have I desired the downfall or loss of others out of evil intent that I might benefit? Have I grieved that God has bestowed greater blessings on others than on me?

Adapted from: Orthodox Christian Network: <http://myocn.net/the-mechanics-of-confession/>