



SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

The gospel tells us that we are more wicked than we ever dared believe, but more loved and accepted than you ever dared hope - at the same time. In fact, if the gospel is true, the more you see your sin, the more certain you are that you were saved by sheer grace and more precious and electrifying that grace is to you. - Tim Keller

The General Examination of Conscience

- I give thanks to God our Lord for the favors I have received from His hand.
- I ask for grace to know my sins and to rid myself of them.
- I demand an account of my soul over the period since I last did this exercise. Walk through the examination of thoughts, words and deeds listed below.
- Ask for pardon from God our Lord for my faults. Consider writing a prayer similar to the Prayer of Confession example at the bottom of this document.
- Resolve to amend with the grace of God.

The Conversation

(Note: Speak exactly as one friend speaks to another. Ask Him for a favor, blaming yourself for some misdeed. Make known your affairs to Him, and seek advice in Him.)

Imagine Christ our Lord present before you and begin to speak with him, asking how it is that, though He is the Creator; He has stooped to become man, and to pass from eternal life to death here in time, that He might die for our sins.

In His presence, reflect upon the following:

What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?

Examination of thoughts

I have victory over sinful thoughts when:

- A thought of committing a sin comes to mind, and I resist it at once. I have overcome it.
- If the same thought returns again and again, and I always resist it. It is conquered.

I am guilty of sinful thoughts when:

- The thought of sin comes to mind and, for a short time I pay heed to it, or receive some sense of pleasure or am somewhat negligent in rejecting it.
- I consent to the evil thought with the intention of carrying it out.
- I actually carry out the evil thought.

Examination of words

- Lying, ridicule, insults or coarse or crude speech.
- Slander and gossip - I sin if I reveal a sin of someone else, unless the sin is publicly known, or I reveal someone's hidden sin to another person with the intention that the person to whom I am talking is able to and will help the sinner to come out of their sin.

Examination of deeds

- You shall have no other gods before me.
- You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God.
- You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
- Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.
- Honor your father and your mother.
- You shall not murder.
- You shall not commit adultery.
- You shall not steal.
- You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.

Close with the Lord's prayer.

A Prayer of Confession

Heavenly Father, You made my body to serve You and my soul to follow hard after You.
With sorrow and contrition of heart, I admit before You my faults and my failures.

My failure to be true even to my own accepted standards;
My self-deception in the face of temptation;
My choosing of the worse when I know the better;
O Lord, forgive!

My silence when You would have me speak and my speech when You would have me keep silence;
My actions when You would have me wait on You and my hesitation when You would have me act;
My complacency toward wrongs that do not affect me and my oversensitivity to those that do;
O Lord, forgive!

My lack of Your compassion in showing mercy for the downtrodden and the lost;
My pride in considering my own comfort and convenience above the needs of others;
My blindness to the suffering of others and my slowness to be taught by my own;
O Lord, forgive!

My failure to apply to myself the standards of conduct I demand of others;
My slowness to see the good in others and to see the evil in myself;
My hardness of heart toward my neighbors' faults and my readiness to make allowance for my own;
O Lord, forgive!

My failure to apply to myself the standards of conduct I demand of others;
My slowness to see the good in others and to see the evil in myself;
My hardness of heart toward my neighbors' faults and my readiness to make allowance for my own;
O Lord, forgive!

My unwillingness to recognize that You have called me to a small work and my brother to a great one;
My ingratitude and grumbling when You place a great opportunity before me to display Your grace;
My failure to recognize Your loving hand in all that touches me;
O Lord, forgive!