

HOPE

Without the virtue of hope, one not only falls into many sins, but also finds it very difficult to lead a cheerful, contented life and to bear the crosses that are the inevitable lot of all mankind.

Hope is a theological virtue by which we confidently expect the help of God in attaining our eternal happiness, and anything we need as a means to that end. The virtue of hope demands therefore that we firmly believe that God will provide us with sufficient grace to avoid sin, with sufficient strength to fulfill the obligations imposed upon us, and with sufficient comfort to make every cross-bearable, if we do our part. The virtue of hope, therefore, forbids two things and all that is connected with them, viz., presumption and despair. Presumption is the sin whereby we expect God's help without doing our part, as when we count on God's forgiveness even when we are committing a sin, or put off the renunciation of sin because we expect to have an opportunity to confess just before we die. Despair is the sin whereby we give up trying because we do not believe that even God's grace is sufficiently strong to help us overcome our own weakness or to grant us forgiveness.

I. Mortal Sins

1. Have I denied the necessity of God's help to attain my salvation, believing that I could win heaven by my own efforts alone?

2. Have I said or seriously thought that God was too merciful to condemn anyone to hell, and that, therefore, despite my serious sins, I would surely be saved?
3. Have I continued in a habit of mortal sin because I believed that some day I would certainly have the grace to repent and be forgiven?
4. Have I committed a mortal sin just because I expected God to forgive me in confession afterwards?
5. Have I said or thought that prayer was not necessary for one who made up his mind to be good?
6. Have I neglected saying any prayer whatsoever for as long as a month at a time?
7. Have I refused to pray in a grave temptation because I did not want God to help me overcome it?
8. Have I deliberately entered a serious and unnecessary occasion of sin, thinking that God would miraculously preserved me from sin or graciously forgiven me if I fell?
9. Have I induced others to commit a sin by telling them that God would forgive them afterward?
10. Have I said that I did not believe in eternal hell?
11. Have I said or thought that it was impossible for me to overcome a certain passion or sinful habit?
12. Have I believed that because my sins in the past were so numerous or so terrible, I could not expect God to forgive me?
13. Have I quit going to Mass or praying because of the thought, "It doesn't do any good"?

14. Have I seriously complained that God sent me more trials than it was possible for me to bear?

15. Have I stopped praying for the grace to avoid sin and save my soul because God did not grant me a certain material favor for which I prayed?

16. Have I given up trying to overcome interior temptation because God would not take the temptation away?

17. Have I encouraged others to commit sins of impurity because "they could not stop committing them anyway"?

18. Have I used poverty as a reason for committing certain serious sins, because I did not believe that God could give me any material aid?

19. Have I scoffed at the joys of heaven, saying I would prefer to have heaven here on earth?

II. Venial Sins

1. Have I brooded over my past sins, giving in half-voluntarily to the fear that they might not be forgiven?

2. Have I permitted discouragement to take possession of my heart because of my frequent faults or my lack of progress in virtue?

3. Have I permitted myself to worry excessively over material setbacks and difficulties, as if God did not know them and could not help me?

4. Have I been morose, melancholy, gloomy, in the presence of others, thus making them uncomfortable and unhappy?

5. Have I been overanxious in regard to my health, over-fearful lest some terrible disease might be contracted?

6. Have I complained against God for not preventing the sins of others, which injured me in some way?
7. Have I deliberately neglected easy opportunities for prayer and devotion, which would have made me stronger in virtue?
8. Have I neglected prayer entirely for days at a time?
9. Have I given in to unreasonable fear of death and of God's judgment?
10. Have I said that I was content to avoid hell, but would not try to avoid or shorten my purgatory?
11. Have I been slothful about trying to acquire the habit of praying in serious temptation?
12. Have I neglected practicing any devotion to the Mother of God, though saints and theologians tell us her help is morally necessary for all?
13. Have I neglected receiving the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion only because I could not feel any profit from them?
14. Have I given up prayer when prayer seemed difficult and uninviting?
15. Have I become so preoccupied working for money or a reputation, or my family, that I did not give myself time to pray or think of doing anything for heaven?