



# PREPARATION FOR CONFESSION

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*“Confession has two parts: first, that we confess our sins, and second, that we receive absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God Himself” (Small Catechism).*

*Confession may be preceded by a candid examination of yourself your actions, motives, and nature (1 Cor: 11:28). This examination leads you to speak the truth about yourself before the Lord. Like a mirror; these questions are designed to reflect the truth about yourself in the light of the Law (Jas. 1:22-25). They expose not merely your sins, but that “by nature you do not possess true fear of God and true faith in God” (Augsburg Confession II). In this way, they encourage serious, thoughtful, and truthful self-examination so that you may heartily and sincerely confess, “God be merciful to me a sinner” (Lk. 18:13). Not all questions may apply to you every time, nor are they exhaustive. They may also encourage pastoral conversation.*

*Absolution strengthens your faith, comforts your conscience, and gives you the courage to confess your sins and sinfulness. Most importantly; it declares that the Lord keeps no record of sin, that there is forgiveness with Him, that He removes our transgressions from us, and remembers our sin no more (Ps. 130:3-4; 103:12; Jer. 31:34).*

## **The First Commandment**

**You shall have no other gods.**

- Do I have the true God Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as my only God?
- Do I fear, love, and trust in God above all things?
- Do I fear God's wrath and therefore avoid every sin?
- Do I expect only good from God in every situation or do I worry, doubt, complain or feel unfairly treated when things go wrong?
- Do I seek God's fatherly care through Word and Sacrament, or do I trust and delight more in the gifts of His creation?
- Do I believe that God forgives me, takes care of me, and will never forsake me because of Jesus?
- Do I believe in myself, my prayers, my faith, my good deeds, or anything else that I do above the Lord God?

## **Second Commandment**

**You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.**

- Do I misuse the Lord's name?
- Do I curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie or deceive by His name?
- Do I call upon Him in every trouble, pray, praise and give thanks?
- Am I tolerant of false preaching and teaching? Do I use God's name carelessly or thoughtlessly? Have I kept all the vows I have made in the Lord's name, such as marriage vows, legal vows, etc.?
- Does the Lord's Word adorn my daily speech and conduct?
- Am I diligent and sincere in my prayers, or have I been lazy, bored or distracted? Do I trust that the Lord God will answer them according to His good and gracious will?

## **Third Commandment**

**Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.**

- Do I keep the Lord's Day holy?
- Do I despise preaching and God's Word?
- Do I hold the Lord's Word sacred and gladly hear and learn it?
- Do I neglect the Gospel and Sacraments or make light of them when they are given? Do I attend the Church's worship faithfully, or do I attend sporadically because I prefer to be elsewhere?
- Do I pray for my pastor and support his efforts to guard Christ's flock from error?

## **Fourth Commandment**

**Honor your father and your mother.**

- Do I honor my father and mother, and other authorities, such as teachers, employers, supervisors, governmental leaders, pastors?
- Do I despise or anger them?
- Do I serve and obey them, love and cherish them?
- Do I receive them as gifts God has put in authority over me?
- Am I disrespectful toward them?
- Do I pray for, support and obey them, or do I rebel against their authority?
- Do I obey all the laws of the city, state and country, and pay my rightful share of all taxes?
- Have I faithfully represented God the Father in disciplining, caring for, and catechizing my children?
- Do I exasperate my children, or do I bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord?
- Am I threatening, abusive, or overbearing to those who are under my charge?

## **Fifth Commandment**

**You shall not murder.**

- Have I hurt or harmed my neighbor in his body?
- Have I neglected to help and support him in every physical need?
- Have I unjustly taken the life of anyone, born or unborn?
- Do I hate anyone, or am I angry with anyone?
- Have I lost my temper or injured my neighbor by thoughts, words, or deeds?
- Do I hold grudges or harbor resentment?
- Am I abusive in word or deed toward my spouse, children, or anyone else?
- Have I ignored the plight of the helpless, or been callous toward genuine need?

## **Sixth Commandment**

**You shall not commit adultery.**

- Have I committed adultery?
- Do I lead a sexually pure and decent life in everything I say and do?
- Do I love and honor my husband or wife?
- Have I had a sexual relationship with someone other than my spouse?
- Have I engaged in premarital sex?
- Do I give myself freely and selflessly to my spouse?
- Have I dishonored marriage by ridicule or divorce?
- Do I desecrate God's gift of sexuality in my thoughts, words or deeds?
- Do I lust, have homosexual desires, masturbate, view pornography, or engage in other sexual immorality?

### **Seventh Commandment**

#### **You shall not steal.**

- Have I stolen anything?
- Have I taken my neighbor's money or possessions, or gotten them in any dishonest way? Do I help my neighbor to improve and protect his possessions and income?
- Do I cheat or otherwise seek to get what I have not earned?
- Do I take care of what I have, pay what I owe, return what I borrow, and respect other people's property?
- Do I give generously, or am I selfish, stingy, and greedy with my time and money?
- Do I neglect my daily work?
- Am I unfaithful to the responsibilities of my vocation?

### **Eighth Commandment**

#### **You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**

- Do I give false testimony against my neighbor? Do I tell lies about my neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation?
- Do I defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way?
- Do I gossip, listen to rumors, or take pleasure in talking about the faults or mistakes of anyone?
- Do I defend others against false accusations?
- Do I judge others without the authority to do so?
- Do I speak the truth in love so that it covers a multitude of sins?

### **Ninth Commandment**

#### **You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**

- Do I covet my neighbor's inheritance or house?
- Do I scheme to get what belongs to my neighbor or to get it in a way which only appears right?
- Do I help and serve my neighbor in keeping what is my neighbor's?
- Am I discontent with what belongs to me?
- Do I crave something better, different, or more than what God has given me?
- Do I seek to satisfy the desires and appetites of my flesh—in greed, gambling, lewd dressing and conduct, gluttony, alcoholism, or drug abuse?
- Do I resent or envy those who have what I don't?
- Have I sued, or used other means, to get something to which I am not entitled?

### **Tenth Commandment**

#### **You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

- Do I covet my neighbor's spouse, workers, animals, or anything that belongs to my neighbor?
- Do I entice or force them away from my neighbor or turn them against him?
- Do I urge them to stay and do their duty?
- Am I discontent with the spouse, family, vocation, job, or employees the Lord has given me?
- Have I done anything to break up a friendship or marriage?
- Have I urged someone to be unfaithful to spouse, family, vocation, job, or employees?
- Have I come between a child and parent?
- Am I contentious or have I encouraged disharmony in my congregation, family, or workplace?
- Am I manipulative or controlling?
- Have I done all I could to mend or strengthen broken relationships?