

FAITH CHAT

with James & John

Why Must We Examine Our Consciences?

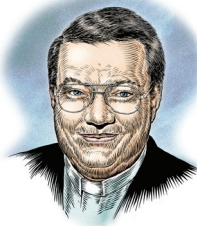
Know This...

How often do you review your life? How often do you assess the good and bad things you've done since your last sacramental confession? If we don't take adequate time each day to examine our consciences, especially before we enter the confessional, we cannot hope to resist sin and grow in the holiness Jesus wants us to experience. When we faithfully make an "Examination of Conscience," we acknowledge our sins, reflect on the state of our souls, and amend our ways.



John: It is difficult to escape the destructive grip of an addiction. Attraction to sin is an addiction. Sin destroys our relationship with God and the other members of His Body.

James: God's natural law is inscribed in the human conscience. Through this interior voice, God helps us judge our thoughts, words, and actions as morally good or bad.



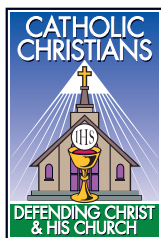
John: Christians are duty-bound to know right from wrong. We must educate ourselves in the teachings of Christ and His Church; but unless we examine our consciences, we can't truly discern the intention of our attitudes and decisions.

James: When we make an examination, the Holy Spirit awakens us to our sins as we check our consciences against the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-17; CCC 2052-2557), the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy (Mt 25:31-46; CCC 2447-49), and the Precepts of the Church (CCC 2041-43).

John: As we become conscious of our sins, we can seek God forgiveness and mercy and share in the freedom and happiness He offers to those who live the Gospel.

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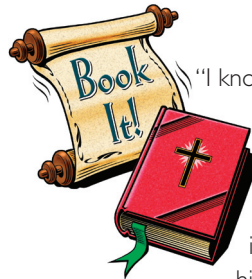
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"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be. The lamp of the body is the eye. If your eye is sound, your whole body will be filled with light; but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be in darkness. And if the light in you is darkness, how great will the darkness be. No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." Mt 6:19-24



BE ATTITUDES "I presuppose that there are three kinds of thoughts in me: that is, one my own, which springs from my mere liberty and will; and two others, which come from without, one from the good spirit, and the other from the bad. [Method for making the general examination] The first Point is to give thanks to God our Lord for the benefits received. The second, to ask grace to know our sins and cast them out. The third, to ask account of our soul from the hour that we rose up to the present Examen, hour by hour, or period by period: and first as to thoughts, and then as to words, and then as to acts, in the same order as was mentioned in the Particular Examen. The fourth, to ask pardon of God our Lord for the faults. The fifth, to purpose amendment with His grace. [Pray the 'Our Father:']" St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, 32, 43



"I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." Ps 51:3 "He who conceals his sins prospers not, but he who confesses and forsakes them obtains mercy." Prov 28:13 "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us... If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." 1 Jn 1:8,10 "When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus." Rom 2:14-16

Father in heaven, You see everything. I truly desire to see both the good and bad You see in me. I beg You to remove the blinders from my eyes and place my mind and heart in touch with my conscience. Please give me the grace necessary to acknowledge my sins, to feel sorrow for them, and to vow to never sin again. I ask this through Jesus Christ, You Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever: Amen.

