

## Questions for Penitents according to The Ten Commandments

by Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky

**Exodus 20:1 – “And God spoke all these words, saying, ‘I am the Lord your God... You shall have no other gods before me’.”**

Do you constantly have the thought of God in mind and the fear of God in your heart?

Is your faith in God shaken by skepticism and doubt?

Do you question the holy tenets of the Orthodox Faith?

Do you despair of God’s mercy?

Do you pray to God every morning and evening? Is your prayer zealous?

Do you always attend Divine Services whenever possible? Do you miss them without good reason?

Do you prefer religious books and do you read them?

Have you read atheistic and heretical books out of sinful curiosity?

When the Church requests it, do you willingly make donations to the Church and to charitable causes?

Have you consulted fortune-tellers [astrologers or numerologists, etc.]? Have you taken part in séances?

[Do you trust in luck and chance? Do you gamble?]

Have you forgotten about the most important thing in life, that is, preparation for eternity and your answer to God if you have given yourself up to vanity, sloth, pleasure and carelessness?

**“You shall not make for yourself a graven 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 and a jealous God...”**

Does God take first place with you? Perhaps God does not take first place, but something else, for example, the accumulation of money, the acquisition of property, amusement and entertainment, food and drink, clothes, self-adornment, the urge to devote attention to yourself, to play the leading part, to receive praise, to spend your time in distraction, in reading frivolous books, etc?

Are you distracted from God by a passion for television, movies, the theater, card games?

Perhaps because of worrying about yourself or your family, you forget about God and fail to please Him and do not carry out what is required of you by the Church?

If so, that means you are serving an idol, and that it, not God, has first place with you.

Perhaps art, sport or study take first place with you. Perhaps some passion (love of money, gluttony, carnal love) has taken possession of heart? Have you made an idol of yourself out of pride or egotism? Examine yourself. [Has pride in yourself blinded you to your own sinfulness?]

**“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”**

Do you use foul language in ordinary everyday conversation?

Have you been thoughtless and irreverent with the name of God, or what is worse, have you treated something holy as a joke? Or, God forbid, in a fit of anger or bitterness or despair have you given way to impudent grumbling at God or even reviling Him?

Have you sworn an oath and then broken it?

Have you given in to despondency?

Do you pray absent-mindedly or inattentively?

**“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; in it you shall not do any work... for in**

**six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day and hallowed it.”**

Do you violate the sanctity of Sundays and the great feast days which have been fixed by the Church, by working for gain or profit?

Instead of attending Divine services on feast-days, do you spend time entertaining yourself, for example at a dance or a theater, movies or some gathering where there is no mention of God?

Have you yourself arranged such entertainments and gatherings and thus distracted other people from attendance at Church?

Do you conscientiously attend Divine services? Do you come to Church late, at the middle or even at the end of the service? Do you leave it early? [Do you loiter in the back of the Church and not enter into the service itself? Do you leave the service to gossip, smoke, or do chores thinking that God will not notice your behavior?

Do you attend Church on Sundays and Feast-Days?

Do you help the poor and those in need?

Do you violate the fasts?

[Are you addicted to alcohol, tobacco, drugs, pleasure or other things harmful to the body, which is the Temple of the Holy Spirit?]

**“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.”**

Have there been times when you were disrespectful towards your parents, or inattentive to their advice and concern? Have you taken care of them in their illness and old age?

If your parents have died, do you often pray for them in church or at home for the repose of their souls?

Have you been disrespectful towards the pastors of the Church? Have you criticized them? Have you become embittered against them when they reminded you of eternity, of preparation for it, of the salvation of your soul, of sins; or when they call on you to be obedient to the Church and her rules?

Have you insulted someone older than you?

**“You shall not kill.”**

You have not physically killed anyone in the literal sense, but perhaps you were the cause of someone’s death indirectly: you could have helped someone poor or sick but did not; you did not feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, taken in a stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick and those in jail?

Have you committed spiritual murder, that is, have you led someone astray from the proper path; have you been enticed by heresy or schism; have you tempted someone to sin?

Have you killed someone spiritually in a display of malice and hatred?

Have you killed someone spiritually or destroyed their life through gossip?

Do you forgive those who offend you? Do you bear malice and resentment in your heart for long?

Do you blame yourself in everything or only in some things?

[Do you blame others unjustly for your own faults and sins and weaknesses?]

Have you had recourse to abortions, which is also killing, a sin of both husband and wife?

**“You shall not commit adultery.”**

Have you lived with someone of the opposite sex in a carnal relationship without having had a church marriage?

Do your conduct yourself freely and loosely with members of the opposite sex?

Have you defiled yourself by giving in to impure and lewd thoughts and desires? Or by reading pornographic books or looking at pornographic pictures? This includes sinful songs, suggestive dances, dirty jokes, [dirty] movies, immodest dress, etc.

Have you committed impure acts by yourself or with others?

Have you had carnal relations with another person?

[Have you engaged in homosexual practices?]

Have you engaged in unnatural practices?

**“You shall not steal.”**

Have you taken someone else’s property in a direct or indirect way? – by fraud, by diverse cunning, conspiracy? [Have you withheld a worker’s pay or attempted to cheat him out of what is his rightful due?]

Perhaps you have not done what you were obliged to do in return for the recompense you received.

Have you excessively yearned for material goods without wishing to share them with others who need them?

Has miserliness taken possession of your soul? [Are you stingy and lacking in generosity when it comes to sharing things that God has given you out of His goodness?]

Have you accepted stolen goods?

Have you disposed of others’ goods when they were entrusted to you?

[Have you misused your employer’s resources or services?]

**“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”**

Have you slandered your neighbor? Have you criticized others, spoken scandal or abused them for what you imagine are their sins and vices?

[Have you lacked good will towards others, preferring to think evil of them?]

Do you like to hear bad rumors about someone and then readily spread them, being allured by gossip and idle chatter?

Do you tell lies? Do you always try to be truthful? [Do you attempt to excuse your lies by calling them mere fibs?]

**“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house... or anything that is your neighbor’s.”**

Do you envy others? Envy always leads to malice and hatred and is capable of leading you commit reckless acts, even killing.

[Brackets indicate added questions.]

**A BRIEF CONFESSION, COMPILED BY ARCHBISHOP TIKHON,  
BASED ON A LONGER VERSION BY SAINT DIMITRI OF ROSTOV**

I confess to the Lord my God before you, reverend father, all my sins which I have committed up to the present day and hour, in deed, word and thought. Every day and every hour I sin through ingratitude to God for His great and numberless blessings to me and His most gracious providence and care for me, a sinner.

I have sinned through:

idle talk

condemnation of others

scorn insubordination

pride

envy

anger

slander

inattention

listlessness

negligence

carelessness

resentment

remembering wrongs  
disobedience  
acceptance of impure thoughts  
lying  
self-will  
reproaching others  
dozing in church  
saying unseemly things  
laughter

self-love  
love of glory  
love of honor  
gluttony  
love of sensual pleasure  
over-eating  
drunkenness  
attachment to things  
love of money

vainglory  
laziness  
missing church services  
neglect of prayer  
grumbling  
concealing sins at confession  
evil speech

I have sinned with all my senses, both spiritual and physical, wherefore I repent to the Lord and ask forgiveness. Absolve all my sins, reverend father, and bless me to partake of the Mysteries of Christ.

**Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.**