

# The Seven Deadly Sins

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The Seven Deadly Sins, also known as the Capital Vices or Cardinal Sins are:

- Pride
- Envy
- Lust
- Anger
- Sloth
- Gluttony
- Greed

## Pride

Pride is the first sin that Scripture tells us about. Isaiah 14:12-15 gives us insight.

St. Thomas Aquinas once said ‘that pride is the beginning of all sin, the Father of all sin and the summit of self-love. It is the sin most hated by God and had a severe penalty for Lucifer with no second chance as He was thrown out of Heaven. He has full light and full knowledge. Adam and Eve were given a second chance but were thrown out of the Garden.’

Pride is the gateway and doorway to other sins as it interacts. It blinds our understanding of the self and makes us delusionary as we consider good qualities to self and not to God. We move independently of God, putting the self first in opposition to the first commandment with ‘my will be done, everything has to be my way.’

Pride can take many different forms:

- **Pride of Intellect:** I know it all with an unwillingness to learn and listen to God. We walk ahead of God rather than behind.
- **Pride of Superiority:** I don’t need you; I don’t need God or the Church to tell me. I’m independent and so not accountable. It leads to contempt of authority and disobedience.
  - Jeremiah 35: 13; *“Yahweh Sabaoth, the God of Israel, says this, “Go and say to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: Will you never learn the lesson and listen to my words, Yahweh demands?”*
- **Pride of Ambition:** Seeking positions, places of honour, recognition, praise for self rather than for others.
- **Pride of Sensitiveness:** Super-sensitive and easily wounded or offended i.e. ‘*poor me*’. This leads to carrying ill feelings, brooding over wrongs and refusing to speak.

- **Pride of Timidity:** Compromise to have people's respect and friendships. Try to hide imperfections and weakness out of fear of ridicule. Don't stand up for what we know to be right.
- **Pride of Scrupulosity:** Unscrupulous about things that should concern us as we fix attention on lesser things. Complacency on things that need our full attention. Compare ourselves with others and not God.
- **Pride of Spirituality:** This will turn us from Divine things. We are happy with our Spiritual Director when they are telling us what we want to hear and tickling our ears. St John of The Cross, speaks about the danger of speaking about spiritual things to draw attention to us and not God. The Saints feared Pride because it is very clever and independent of God.

**Remedies:** Gift of Counsel.

Take spiritual counsel and submit yourself whilst asking for God's opinion, revelation, direction and knowledge.

Go to the source of Truth and check it out i.e. Story of Adam & Eve. We operate under God's authority, a competent authority, moving us deeply into humility. Asking God what He thinks advises listening to no one else but God's wisdom.

**Words from The Cross:** '*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*' or '*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*' Why? Show me? Teach me? Help me? Jesus is feeling the effects of our sins of Pride as it makes us feel forsaken because sin alienates us from God and each other. Jesus is touching our limitations.

**Virtues:** Humility, Obedience & Gratitude.

Know that we are Children, we are weak and without God we are nothing. Humility gives us that dependence on God, to know and accept our limitations. The fruit of humility will give us obedience to be docile and submissive to God and take legal authority over us.

This makes us grateful to God and to others for what they do for us. Pride will give us a fear of submitting our will to God.

### Envy

There are many definitions of Envy but it is basically desiring something I don't have, I can't have or I wish I did have. Again, we cannot directly control the rising of an emotion in our hearts but it is the second step about what are we going to do with it?

St. Thomas Aquinas once said 'envy is a sorrow or sadness over another's good because that good is regarded as something withheld or taken away from the envious person's excellence or reputation. We feel deprived of something we want or desire and we have a sorrow & sadness that someone else has it.'

How does Envy reveal itself? By discord, hatred and backbiting, malicious joy, rudeness, jealousy, accusations and rivalry. It can also misjudge or misrepresent another. The fruit of envy will bring about a spiritual death in relationships with others, with self and perhaps God. This shows how strong Envy is.

What does envy look like in me? Watch for the little feelings of envy: *'Why didn't I get complimented?', 'Why are they so popular?', 'Why didn't I get recognized?', 'Why are they more prayerful than I?', 'Why are they so constantly kind, nice and patient?'*

Envy will encourage us to lie, to deceit, to conceal, to gossip, to disobey, to wish others harm, to fall and to fail.

**Remedies:** Gift of Wisdom.

In wisdom we see things from God's point of view and different from our own/ God's point of view sets us free. Wisdom's highest point is to surrender. If we surrender, we are in union totally with God and we have Heaven within us. We enter into a special relationship with God, we become good friends and all we want to do is please our friends as Jesus said 'I no longer call you servants but friends' (John 15:15).

**Words from The Cross:** *'This day you will be with Me in Paradise.'* These words will bring victory and put envy to death. The key words are 'with Me'. With Jesus. Whenever we are with Jesus we are fulfilled. We are rich though often we may think that we are poor.

**Virtues:** Love, Humility & Obedience.

The main virtue that we need is Charity or Love. Humility and Obedience will always interact with each other but there isn't any power like Love. Love will be manifested through Humility to Obedience. The more we empty ourselves of self-love and self-intent the more we will be filled with God's love.

### **Lust**

Lust is the inordinate love of pleasures of the flesh i.e. impurities. It fosters excessive love of the world and worldly things and can be nurtured by excessive attachment to ease, excessive eating/drinking, watching inappropriate TV, internet sites and porn addiction.

It is a powerful sin as it blinds our mind, perverts our wills and hardens our heart as insensitive to God's will and conscience.

It is important to guard our eyes from inappropriate magazines, books and papers and guard our ears from inappropriate conversation and music lyrics.

The more we love God and others by reaching out the more pure we become. Our intimacy with God and others is controlled by God and is therefore orderly and not empty within.

St. Augustine once said that '*man cannot live without joy*'. So when we are deprived of joys we seek other pleasures and if we are not attached to God then we attach to other loves.

It is important to watch our relationships and do not become over familiar or too dependent and be careful in choosing our friends.

**Remedies:** Gift of the Holy Spirit and 'Fear of the Lord'.

A deep hatred of sin and fear to displease God in any way will protect us. When we choose a spouse, we choose to reject all other men and women and when we choose God, we are choosing to reject all that is not of God. The Fear of God is 'I'm choosing God first and only wanting to do what pleases him'. We then hate sin because of our deep love for God.

**Words from The Cross:** '*There is your mother*'. Our Mother Mary is a tremendous safeguard for purity. Through the Immaculate Conception She had full and true freedom from sin. Run to Her, The Refuge of Sinners and The Comforter of the Afflicted. She will seek the graces for us by interceding for us. '*There is your Mother*'. Jesus gave Mary to us, to be illuminated by Her light, strengthened by Her nourishment, led by Her spirit, sheltered under Her protection, supported by Her arm. Take Her to your heart like St John.

**Virtues:** Chastity, Temperance & Modesty.

- Chastity regulates our basic desires; create pure hearts and pure intentions
- Temperance balances us, it mortifies the senses and brings about restraint
- Modesty as stated by Our Lady of Fatima 'in dress can lead to the loss of immortal souls'

If we were to remove lust from society there would be an economical depression.

Seek a passionate relationship with God!

### Anger

Anger is an emotion and an emotion itself is not a sin. An emotion happens, it's a feeling; we cannot directly control one arising. However, we can choose a way of how we are going to use it. Our will can command any emotion to flourish or to cease.

If we are not going to use the emotion for the God, then Satan can use them. When we do not consent to anger it is virtuous and when we consent to anger it

is sinful. When we give into anger Satan takes over, we can open doors to other sins and we can lose control.

Anger can express itself not only in shouting, ranting and screaming but sarcasm, stubbornness, retaliation, revenge, holding grudges, nit-picking, being sullen and being withdrawn. It has many faces and it can hunger right reason.

The root of anger is basically a fear of forgiving. Ultimately we are going to get the fear that if I forgive, I am going to be hurt again. Anger is rooted in the fear of forgiving and rejection. We are afraid to let our protection, safe-house and anger go because it will leave us vulnerable to be hurt again.

**Remedies:** Gift of Piety and Gift of the Holy Spirit.

To fight anger the Gift of Piety and Gift of Holy Spirit are given at holy confirmation whilst prayer accentuates it and counteracts our anger. Piety is knowing the Father, knowing His Love, and being able to call Him 'Abba' or Daddy. If we can do this we will want to please Him and do what He asks of us, like Jesus his Son.

**Words from The Cross:** *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."* In the midst of his excruciating suffering, the heart of Jesus was focused on others rather than himself. Here we see the nature of his love - unconditional and divine.

**Virtues:** Gentleness, Meekness & Patience.

Jesus said learn from Me, for I am meek and humble of heart (Matthew 11:29). These restore our inner peace and quiet and give us the strength to forgive.

### **Sloth**

Sloth is the inordinate love of rest, which leads us to omit spiritual, physical and mental duties.

It relates to avoiding obligations and the things responsible for it can be hidden and deceptive with busyness about the wrong things. It can be spiritual or mental laziness or procrastination in not doing something as well as we can or half-heartedly and sloppy.

Sloth can lead to oppressive sorrow, loss of meaning in our lives and part of the personality of this sin is that we don't finish projects and get bored and tired easily. Sloth is prevalent in a society that lacks passion for truth and where people go looking for things that will make them happy.

St. Augustine once said 'he who has God has everything and he who has everything but God has nothing'.

Spiritual Sloth tempts us to omit our spiritual duties by not going to confession as frequently, shortening our prayer life, occasionally reading scripture, complaining that the rosary is becoming monotonous and repetitive and at the Blessed Sacrament nothing happens.

St. John of The Cross said that this is a dark night for the soul. We must seek purification of the soul for true Love and get close to The Cross. Most people get to this point and turn away because of no maturity, no energy and no Love connection with God. Sloth prevents union with The Cross.

Sloth can be deceptive as it makes us busy but not with God e.g. Facebook, e-mails, computers, washing and other modern conveniences i.e. no time, no time, no time.

**Remedies:** Knowledge.

To know what God knows, know his will and see things from God's point of view.

**Words from The Cross:** *'It is finished!'* Jesus is cutting through sloth. He persevered. He stayed with it. He finished the work He was called to do by the Father. Not what He chose to do instead. He had the Grace and Fruits to do it. Sloth undermines and tries to stop or at least delay what God wants for us.

**Virtues:** Love & Obedience.

Love is manifested through the sacrifice of obedience. We can do everything when we have Love. When we understand what God is asking we should do it immediately.

Sloth is a fear of commitment i.e. as long as I stay busy, busy, busy then I don't have to be committed. The root of sloth is the fear of being committed to God, and prayer, which connects us with God.

### **Gluttony**

St. Thomas Aquinas states that gluttony is an inordinate desire in eating and drinking. St. Isidore of Seville adds that a gluttonous person is excessive in what when, how and how much is eaten and drunk. **Key Idea:** taking more than is needed.

The basic root of gluttony is an unconscious self-image of emptiness that is eating us e.g. loneliness, anxiety, frustration, extreme stress and gluttony. Satan tempts us through food. If we look to the Garden of Eden, Eve 'the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and pleasing to the eye, and that it was enticing for the wisdom that it could give' (Genesis 3:6). It is a powerful temptation. Satan tried it again with Jesus (Matthew 4: 1-11). Temptations come when we are hungry, empty and especially when feeling empty.

Jesus is the bread of life. He feeds us daily. He feeds that emptiness in Mass, in Scripture and in Prayer.

Loving God for what we can and what we gain gives us consolations and experiences. We find this especially in new converts and people newly baptized in the Holy Spirit. Consolations are God's gift and just like little children we are more interested in what we are going to receive than in what we are going to give. If we stay in this place rather than mature spiritually we are more likely to commit gluttony.

Satan wants to keep us here so that we don't grow in faith and belief. Spiritual gluttony leads to selfishness and self-courtedness i.e. what can I get out of this. One of the fruits that Satan is after in Spiritual Gluttony is to tell us what God is doing and what God is saying. Which is of course not true leading us to question God.

Therefore ask the question: 'Am I obeying my Spiritual Director and those who have competent authority over me?'

Obedience is the criteria for us to know if we are falling into spiritual gluttony. Some have an aversion to sacrifice, suffering and The cross through self-imposed fasting.

**Remedies:** Gift of the Holy Spirit & Gift of Fortitude.

This helps us to hang in there no matter what. We are hanging in there and saying I don't have the courage. God will say, let go. You will have His strength and His courage. Fortitude will give you the strength for self-mortification, self-denial and fasting. It will put our wants and desires to death.

**Words from The Cross:** *'I thirst.'* Jesus has lost a lot of blood and is therefore extremely thirsty. However, he is thirsting for love also. He goes through that kind of thirst to repair the sin of excessive love of self and flesh. He is repairing the sin of gluttony. These words will help us thirst for real love and be in true union with God.

**Virtues:** Temperance & Prudence.

Controls and Moderates. We want to eat and drink moderately. The fruit of temperance is 'self-control'. Prudence gives us knowledge of how to act. St Augustine states that prudence is the knowledge of what to seek and what to avoid.

Our Spiritual Director can show us how to fast and how to mortify. Gluttony is the fear of mortification and through the Cross; we can decrease this fear of putting our false self to death.

## Greed

Greed, also known as covetousness and avarice is an inordinate love or desire for worldly goods such as possessions or money i.e. an inordinate love of possessing.

St. Paul states in Timothy 6:10 that 'The love of money is the root of all evils' and there are some who, pursuing it, have wandered away from the faith and so given their souls any number of fatal wounds.'

Greed goes against two commandments. The first is 'I am the Lord your God, you shall have no strange Gods before you'. This means not to have any idols and not to have anything before God. This sin doesn't make God its treasure. Jesus tells us that you cannot serve both God and money (Matthew 6:24). The second commandment that it goes against is 'You shall not covet your neighbours goods'. Avarice comes out of not having a good solid relationship with God the Father who is the provider.

How does it show up in me? It is a self-centered sin and can lead us to forget about our real obligation – the poor.

It can manifest itself in our difficulty to depend on God alone. We can't do things independent of God and those in competent authority over us.

Greed can show up in our spiritual lives i.e. spiritual avarice when we begin to worry about our spiritual failure and inability to pray. We may begin to worry that we are having too many distractions or ugly thoughts and temptations and can't get rid of them. In other words, it's all turning in on ones self. It's about me. We are no longer solely relying on God. We are afraid to rely on God to change us and provide for us.

**Remedies:** Gift of Understanding.

It is a gift of seeing and seeing more with faith. We see beneath and we see the mystery. We see the Truth. It will open our eyes to the broader picture of what God wants. The gift of understanding penetrates Divine Truth. It helps us to understand the Mystery of Jesus present in the Holy Eucharist in a deeper way.

**Words from The Cross:** *'Father into Your Hands, I commend My Spirit.'* Into your hands I commend my will, my mind, my memory and my heart. Let it all go into the hands of the Father. Let go of all the control. Whatever we let go of now, God will ever be outdone in generosity. The beauty of coming against Avarice is that it brings us into a deeper relationship with the Father. That he is our provider. That Jesus and the Father will take care of me in all things. The Grace won on The Cross is that we will totally be content and at peace to have Them be our sole support.

**Virtues:** Generosity & Faith.



I will help counteract greed because the more we give the more detached we will become. It is about focusing more on giving than receiving. If we really believe that God loves us and we are His child and He is our provider, then this whole aspect of giving, letting go and not hanging onto everything will be easier. Sharing and not wanting to possess becomes easier because we want to be totally His and have nothing other than Him. In the Spiritual Life we allow God to carry us. We are not trying to carry ourselves.

Greed is rooted in the fear of detachment, the fear of giving all, and fear of letting go. It's a fear of total dependence on God and letting go of our own independence.