

# **CALMS in CHRIST**

## **The Examination of Conscience in Christ in Seven Steps**

## **The 7 Steps of a Holy Spirit-Led, Daily Examination of Conscience in Christ**

Introduction: One of the things that God wants us to do is to be aware of his son's teachings and check regularly to make sure we are following those teachings and commandments. To do that in a consistent way, Christians across the centuries have utilized a spiritual discipline called: Daily Examination of Conscience,

### **Step 1**

**By faith**, humbly enter into the living presence of our compassionate and merciful God and Father and of his Son, your Lord and Redeemer, the Risen Jesus. When, by faith, you are in the presence of God, to on to Step 2.

### **Step 2**

**Confess sins:** When you first begin to do a Daily Examination of Conscience, confess any sins of which you are aware. Sins are whatever is against the Ten Commandments and whatever you know to be against Jesus' more demanding gospel teachings. Sins are also not doing whatever it is that you currently believe to be God's will for you to do today and with your life. Having confessed your sins in God's merciful and loving presence, go on to Step 3.

### **Step 3**

**Repent:** In the process of confessing your sins, commit to God—with the help of the Holy Spirit—not only to never repeat those sins but also to pursue the virtue that is 180 degrees opposite each sin.

**For example**, repenting of lusting in your heart and mind does not simply mean to repent of such thoughts and immediately cease to dwell on them in your mind, not even for a moment longer. To repent also means to strive toward purity of thoughts, purity of heart and mind.

That means to work with the Holy Spirit to see others as who they truly are: God's children, as person, not objects of lusting. "Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God," and they shall see others as God's children created and redeemed for a life of holiness. [Mt 5:7]

And "you have heard it said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you, if you allow looking or thinking about a person to become lustful, you have already committed adultery in your heart." [Mt 5:27-28]

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—God's good, pleasing and perfect will." [Romans 12:1-3]

"Purity of heart, chastity, holds a glorious and distinguished place among the virtues, because she, alone, enables a person to see God; hence to see Truth. Christ Jesus himself said: "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God." [Augustine] When you have repented before our merciful God, go on to step 4.

#### **Step 4**

**Be assured** that when you so repent, your merciful Father not only forgives you your sins because of Jesus' death on the cross for you, but Christ himself will empower you with a banquet of hope and strength. And be assured of the very sure help of the Holy Spirit to help you and encourage you grow ever more like Christ. [Jn 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; Rom 9:1; Eph 1:13.] **Be assured!**

And if during the day, you sin again, repent again! And if you do, **be assured** that you will be forgiven again and be empowered by God to do good. God does not need you to wonder if you are forgiven or, worse still, to try to feel forgiven. It is by faith, not by feelings, that you are saved. Assured of God's forgiveness and new life in Christ, go on to Step 5.

#### **Step 5**

**Believe without wavering** that, by the help of the Holy Spirit, you will begin to become more like Christ, the first born of a new creation. **Believe!** It is not a feeling; it is an assent of the mind and the will to the truth of the redeeming work of Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in you.

"Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. ... And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach God must believe that God exists and that God rewards those who seek God." [He 11:1-3, 6] When you so believe, go to Step 6.

#### **Step 6**

**Thank God** for blessings received on earth and also envision a few of your treasures (people) in heaven for which you are thankful and make sure to thank God for personally sending you the Holy Spirit as your very own personal helper and coach to become ever more like Christ. When you have lifted thanksgiving to God, go to Step 7.

## Step 7

Finally, with God the Holy Spirit who lovingly indwells you, seek to know and to do God's will for you for the rest of today. And be assured that together with the Holy Spirit you will know and do God's will. When you have discerned God's will for you, go forth and live the gospel by doing God's will 24/7 with the heart and mind of Christ.

### Postscript I

To best accomplish "Step 7", discerning God's will, learn how to do My Daily Bread in Christ. This core, LTH, Christ-centered, spiritual discipline can be found online at: "CALMS in CHRIST 1A: Doing My Daily Bread [A Core Spiritual Discipline]".

### Postscript II

As you continue to daily do an Examination of Conscience, you will grow in awareness of sins against love of God and neighbor, which knowledge, with repentance, will be much to the benefit of your growth in Christ-likeness and lead to a deeply meaningful and peace-filled life. However, for now, just continue to confess your sins against God's ways of which you are aware.

### Postscript III

Having finished the Examination of Conscience, you have options if you are doing this on your own. You can now go to or back to **CALMS in CHRIST 1A: Doing My Daily Bread** or you can go to **CALMS and CALMS in CHRIST 3A-D: Tough Problems** or you can go to **CALMS in CHRIST 3E-H: Discerning My Spiritual Achilles Heel**. If you have an LTH coach, they will provide next step instructions.