

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR THOSE WHO STRUGGLE WITH SCRUPULOSITY

1. Do not repeat prayers, no matter how badly they may have been prayed, even if the prayers were given to you as a penance during the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession).
2. Do not repeat the confession of sins that have already been confessed and which have never been re-committed.
3. If you doubt the earnestness of your sorrow in Confession, consider the sorrow as having been adequate.
4. If you are doubtful as to whether a past action committed was sinful, mention it simply to your confessor.
5. If you are worrying that maybe you never confessed a certain sin from your past, consider it confessed. If you know for a fact that you have never confessed that sin, then confess it simply. The Holy Spirit does not torment us with doubts and/or guilt; rather, He always brings peace as He awakens our conscience to our sins. (cf. *2 Corinthians 7:10-11*: “Indeed, sorrow for God’s sake produces a repentance without regrets, leading to salvation, whereas worldly sorrow brings death. Just look at the fruit of this sorrow which stems from God. What a measure of holy zeal it has brought you.”)
6. Examine your conscience for no longer than three minutes each day, and for no longer than about ten minutes before you go to Confession.
7. If you have prayed at the time of temptation, you can be sure you did not commit a mortal sin.
8. If you have a history of scrupulosity, and you have made a General Confession at some time in your past, do not make another General Confession. Once a month is a good norm for the frequency of a regular Confession.
9. If possible, go to Confession to the same confessor-priest.
10. Most importantly, cultivate a humble heart by complete obedience to the direction of your confessor. Be patient with yourself. Love is the goal of all our lives. It is important to remember that scrupulosity *usually* (and, quite often, *ultimately*) stems from one’s personal pride or arrogance, as though the scrupulous person holds this personal opinion: “I have a higher norm than most normal people.”