

Spiritual Game Plan

Do you want to be a really good Christian? The first of your battles will be to enter into and remain in the state of grace, to avoid any mortal sin. And, then, because you want to love God above all things, you will also try not to commit venial sins.

The practice of some acts of piety throughout the day will help you to have a divine contemplative life in the midst of the daily routine. The habitual performance of these acts will also be the foundation for growing in Christian virtues. Most important is to be consistent in your daily schedule, in your spiritual game plan, so that you will live as a child of God.

Daily

- *Get up at a fixed time*, as early as possible. Eight hours of sleep should be enough. More than this or less than six hours of sleep is usually not healthy.
- *Offer your day* to God through the intercession of our Lady.
- *Work with order and intensity* during the day as a way of serving God. Set goals and establish priorities in order to develop a practical schedule. Sanctifying ordinary work is the goal of our life.
- *Try to attend Mass, receiving Holy Communion*, as often as possible. This is the best sacrifice we can offer to God. Prepare yourself for the Mass by spending some time in prayer.
- *Spend some time in mental prayer* before the Blessed Sacrament (15 minutes, if possible).
- Pray the *Angelus* at noontime. (During Eastertime, we say the *Regina Caeli* instead.)
- Pray the *Rosary*, if possible, with your family, offering each decade for a specific intention.
- Do some other *spiritual reading*. Start with the New Testament or some well-known spiritual book. Ten to fifteen minutes is sufficient.
- Make a short *examination of conscience* at the end of the day before going to bed. Two or three minutes is enough. Follow these steps: Humble yourself in the presence of God. Tell Him, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." Ask for light to acknowledge your defects and virtues and to see the dangers and opportunities of the day. Ask for repentance, amendment, and encouragement.

Weekly

- Center all activities around the *Holy Mass* on *Sunday*, the Lord's Day. It is also a family day-for rest and spiritual growth.
- If you do not receive Holy Communion every day, receive at least on Sundays and holy days of obligation.
- Saturday is traditionally dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Honor her and say some special prayer, such as the *Hail Holy Queen*.

Monthly

- Go to *Confession* at least once a month. It is the sacrament of joy. Pope John Paul II says: "God is always the one who is principally offended by sin-'I have sinned against You' -and God alone can forgive. He does so through the ministry of the priest in the sacrament of Penance, which is the ordinary way of obtaining forgiveness and remission of mortal sins. Every mortal sin must always be stated with its determining circumstances in an individual confession."
- Seek and follow the *spiritual guidance* of a wise, prudent, and knowledgeable priest.
- *Spend a few hours in recollection*, best done before the Blessed Sacrament. Consider how you are directing your life toward God.

Yearly

- *Spend two to three days each year in silence*, speaking with God only. A few days of *retreat* are necessary for the soul in the same way that the body needs a vacation. It is a yearly opportunity for conversion.

Always

- Stay in the *presence of God*: be aware that He is always close to you. Try to please Him in everything as a child tries to please his/her parents.
- *Thank God* for the graces that He constantly gives you.
- Do everything *for the love of God*: this is purity of intention. Always purify your intention. Make *acts of contrition* and *atonement* for your sins and sins of others.
- Try to *live, as you would like to die*. We shall die as we have lived.

Mother Teresa's Humility List



Humility is the mother of all virtues; purity, charity and obedience. It is in being humble that our love becomes real, devoted and ardent. If you are humble nothing will touch you, neither praise nor disgrace, because you know what you are. If you are blamed you will not be discouraged. If they call you a saint you will not put yourself on a pedestal.

~ St. Teresa of Calcutta

As we can see from this thought-provoking quote, Mother Teresa doesn't see humility as the world sees it. The world sees it as blind self-neglect or a degrading regard for oneself. In contrast, her life shows us that she was a champion for the precious, God-given dignity of every single person.

Her definition of humility stresses the down-to-earth, unattached nature of true humility. In practicing it, we have a clarity of sight that allows us to not be consumed by the standards and judgments of the world, whether those judgments place us in a positive or negative light.

Here is her counter-cultural, inspiring, and challenging **Humility List**.

Mother Teresa's Humility List

1. Speak as little as possible about yourself.
2. Keep busy with your own affairs and not those of others.
3. Avoid curiosity.
4. Do not interfere in the affairs of others.
5. Accept small irritations with good humor.
6. Do not dwell on the faults of others.
7. Accept censures even if unmerited.
8. Give in to the will of others.
9. Accept insults and injuries.
10. Accept contempt, being forgotten and disregarded.
11. Be courteous and delicate even when provoked by someone.
12. Do not seek to be admired and loved.
13. Do not protect yourself behind your own dignity.
14. Give in, in discussions, even when you are right.
15. Choose always the more difficult task.

Taking a Closer Look

At first glance, Mother Teresa's "Humility List" appears to be a startling and even extreme guide to living the virtue of humility.

However, if we look at the list with eyes of faith and thoughtful discernment, we'll see that it is not "extreme"—it simply requires those two things: faith and discernment.

Faith. These guidelines are not for the faint of heart or the weak-willed! They are challenging, and require the grace of God to sustain us and increase our stamina when we wish to fall back into our deep-rooted, prideful ways. So take heart—if God wishes us to live the virtues (which He does, of course) then we must trust that He will provide us with the means to fulfill His will.

Discernment. Some of the points on the list *can* be taken to an unhealthy extreme: "Accept insults and injuries..." "Do not interfere in the affairs of others..." In some serious cases, it may end up being the virtuous response is to do the opposite of what she's saying! Just remember that Mother Teresa's list is not meant to be applied to situations in which we encounter immoral or unlawful behavior. Here is another clarification: when she says "Avoid curiosity," she is not saying "Don't be interested in others." She wants us to avoid *idle* curiosity, which can lead us to sin. This list is for our daily sanctification. We invite you to take this list to prayer, and ask Our Lord and St. Mother Teresa to help you see how to make these important points a part of your daily growth in virtue!

Learn to be humble by doing all the humble work and doing it for Jesus. You cannot learn humility from books; you learn it by accepting humiliations. Humiliations are not meant to torture us; they are gifts from God. These little humiliations—if we accept them with joy—will help us to be holy, to have a meek and humble heart like Jesus. ~ St. Teresa of Calcutta