

The Ten Commandments

CONCEPTS OF FAITH

When we sin are we still images of God?

Yes, but we are not the best images of God at that time.

What did God give us that tells us how to act as images of God?

God gave us the Ten Commandments. They tell us how to be the best images of God we can be.

How does grace help us?

Grace helps us believe what God tells us, helps us act as images of God, and makes it possible for us to live forever with God in heaven.

Sin is to break these wise and useful rules which the Lord gave us.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Vocabulary

commandments: directions God gives us so that we can act as Christ acted.

We Are Images of God

God made us in His image. We have minds to think and wills to make choices. We choose how to act with our wills. We are created to act as Christ did. We can choose to do what is right and act as images of God, or we can choose to do what is wrong.

God gave us the Ten Commandments, which tell us how to act as images of God. The Ten Commandments are directions God gives us so that we can act as Christ acted. If we follow the Ten Commandments, we will become better images of God.

There are always going to be temptations, which make wrong choices look good. It's not always easy to make a right choice. Our feelings are not always accurate signs of whether a choice is right or wrong. Sometimes we can feel happy, even though our choice was a wrong one. Other times we can feel sad, even though we made a right choice. Again, we see that it's not always easy to make a right choice. The Ten Commandments help us to know the right choices. They are a guide for us, to help us judge right from wrong.

When we knowingly and willingly choose not to follow the Ten Commandments, we sin. We are still images of God, but we are not the best images of God that we can be. We are not acting the way we were created to act. When we sin, we hurt God, ourselves, and others. When we follow the first three of God's commandments, we love God by respecting His name, praising Him, and keeping God's day holy. When we follow the other seven of God's commandments, we show that we love ourselves and others, because we do what is good for us and them.

Even when we trust God, it is not always easy to do what He asks us. God gave us the gift of His life, grace, to help us follow the Ten Commandments. Grace helps us believe what God tells us, and it helps us act as images of God. Grace also makes it possible for us to live someday with God in heaven.

Right choices are not always easy. God gave us the Ten Commandments to tell us what the right choices are. The commandments tell us how to love and how to give ourselves to God and others. The more right choices we make, the better images of God we become.

Here is a story about Saint Augustine. As he was growing up, he sometimes made wrong choices.

Saint Augustine

AUGUSTINE was born in the year 354. He was born in the town of Tagaste, in a Roman province of northern Africa. Augustine was not baptized as a child. For a long time, he was not even sure there was a God. Augustine's father, Patricius, was a pagan. He did not believe in Christ. Augustine's mother, Monica, was a Catholic. She prayed every day that Augustine and his father would believe in God and become Catholics, too.

At that time, not every boy was lucky enough to attend school. Augustine was fortunate; he was able to go to school. However, Augustine did not feel that he was lucky. He did not like school. He was smart, but he did not like to study. Augustine was interested only in sports and games. His parents and teachers had to force him to do his lessons.

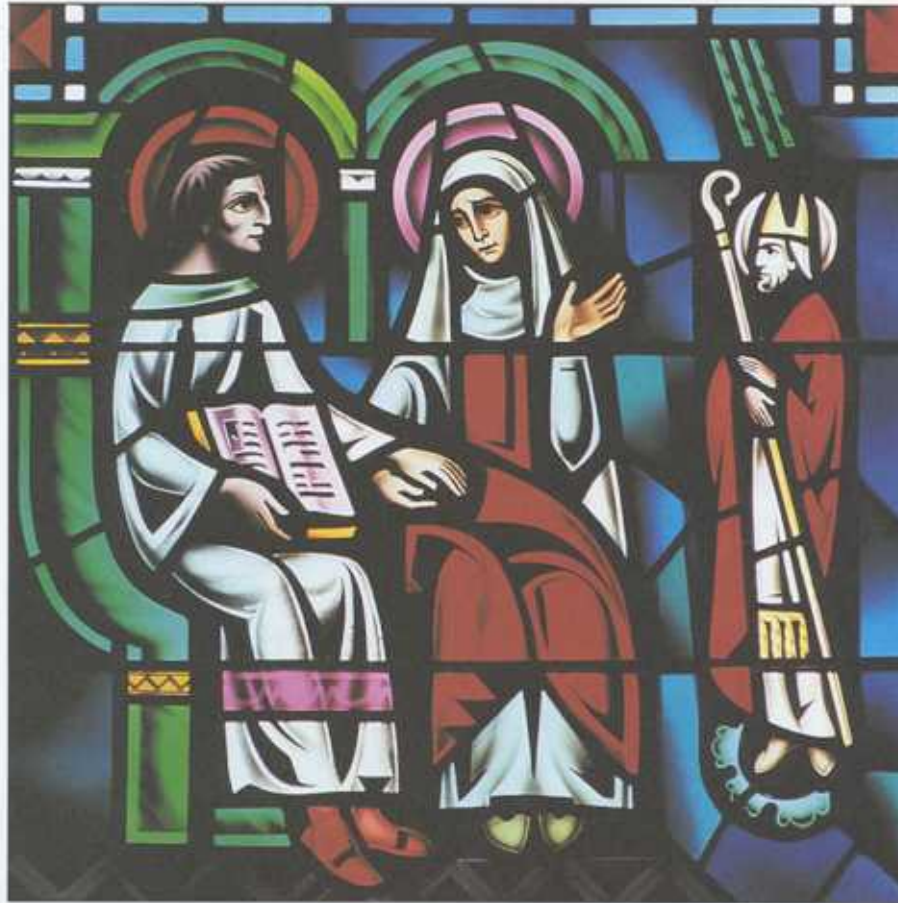
Augustine made many wrong choices as he was growing up. He did not always respect his parents or his teachers. Sometimes he would have an argument with them or purposely embarrass them. Sometimes he would even steal from them. He would cheat at games in order to win. But he would not allow anyone else to cheat. If he caught other people cheating, he would start a fight with them.

One time, Augustine and some of his friends went out at night and stole pears in an orchard. Then they threw the pears to some pigs. Augustine didn't want or need the pears. He simply enjoyed stealing them.

When Augustine was seventeen years old, he went to the city of Carthage to study. His friend Alypius went with him. This time Augustine studied very hard in school. He still made some wrong choices, however. When he met a girl and fell in love with her, he did not marry her in the Church. He believed many untrue things about God and made fun of holy people. He used his talents to make other people miserable, and he tried to make himself happy. But he was never really happy.

During this time, Augustine received a letter from his mother. His father, Patricius, had died. Monica said that she would miss her husband, but she was happy, because, before he died, Patricius had become a Catholic. Monica said she was still praying that Augustine would believe in God and become a Catholic.

Augustine continued to search for happiness and the cause of evil. He listened to people talk about God and the Catholic Church. One person Augustine listened to was the bishop, Saint Ambrose. Saint Ambrose's teachings began to make an impression on Augustine.



One day, a man named Pontitian came and spoke with Augustine and his friend Alypius. He talked to them about two men who had changed their lives and become devoted to God.

As Pontitian told this story, Augustine reflected on his past sins and was filled with deep sorrow. Augustine left Alypius and went out into the garden. Augustine cried out to God, "And you, O Lord, how long? How long, O Lord, will you be angry forever? Remember not our past iniquities [sins]."