

Moral Decision Making

Chapter 39 Summary

Chapter Learning Objectives

- The participants will explore how our conscience helps us to make good moral decisions.
- The participants will understand the factors that determine the morality of an act.
- The participants will examine the seven deadly sins and how they are the basis for other sins.

Content Summary

1. Our conscience helps us use our reason to judge whether an act is right or wrong, and to make good moral decisions.
2. We judge the morality of an action in three ways: the object (the act itself), the intention, and the circumstances.
3. Some actions are always wrong. At other times, the degree of right or wrong depends on the intention and the circumstances surrounding the action.
4. The ability to make good moral decisions depends on having a conscience that is well-formed.
5. We are helped to form our conscience through Sacred Scripture, the Church's teachings, prayer, the guidance of holy people, and the Holy Spirit.
6. We must always obey the certain judgment of our conscience and take responsibility for our actions. Yet, just as ignorance of the law is no excuse for breaking it, so a poorly formed conscience is no excuse for choosing to sin.
7. Sin is anything we say or do that goes against God's Law. (We can also sin by omission, that is, by *not* saying or doing something we *should*.)
8. Vices are habitual bad habits that make it easier to commit sin. They are the opposite of virtues.
9. When we are separated from God and others through sin, God brings us back through a process called *justification*. God once again makes us worthy of being united with him by forgiving our sins, making us holy, and renewing our spiritual lives.
10. In our efforts to make good moral decisions, we are supported by God's love.
11. The Precepts of the Church also give us practical guidance to help us grow in love of God and neighbor. Through the Church, we join with others who are also trying to live the good life God wants for us.
12. The teachings of the Pope and bishops, also called the Magisterium, help us understand Christ's teachings and how they apply to the situations we encounter today.

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