

Truth Commandments

Inspired by Mark 10:17-27

Colleen knelt beside her bed and prayed, "Lord, what must I do to spend eternity in Heaven with You?" She closed her eyes and took a slow, deep breath. She held it wanting to feel the life in her lungs, almost afraid to exhale for fear this might be her final moment on Earth. As she exhaled, she listened to the air pushing its way into the room. Her hands felt the stitching of her grandmother's quilt which lay neatly folded across the bed. Colleen desperately wanted to hear her grandmother's voice again. "Now is the time I most need her wisdom," she thought. Another deep breath in, and slow exhale out. One after another. Waiting. Waiting. Waiting for an answer.

She stayed in the same position for nearly an hour, trying to stay focused on hearing God speak. "Please Lord," she pleaded. "I am a good person. Let me hear your voice!" She decided to try another position and moved to the corner chair by the window. Colleen sat very still, feet flat on the floor, working hard to keep her mind clear so she could hear an answer. She was afraid to move. She needed to hear an answer! Her life seemed to be off-course lately. Something was nagging her, tugging at her heart. "I am a good person," she reassured herself, taking a personal inventory to prove it — "I pray a daily Rosary. I say the Blessing before meals. I go to Mass every Sunday and put money in the collection each week. I obey The Ten Commandments," and she recited a checklist out loud: "I do not kill. I do not cheat. I do not steal or lie. I respect my mom and dad. I have obeyed all The Commandments since I was a young girl!"

Colleen heaved a sigh the size of a canyon and opened her eyes. She was surprised how dark the room had gotten. She turned on the table lamp next to her chair and stood before the window. The field behind her home was still and silent.

"Do the trees and grass and animals hear God's voice?" she wondered out loud. "I don't think I ever will!" Then she sunk back into her chair, hugged a pillow, and sobbed. The next morning, she awoke early, exhausted and thirsty. She had a vague memory of climbing into bed and crying herself to sleep. As she made her way downstairs to the kitchen, she felt like a visitor in her own body. What was happening? Why was she so discontented?

She put on a pot of coffee, washed her face, and drank a full glass of water. Surely she had used up all her tears for this week. She couldn't remember ever crying so much or feeling so drained. She tied her hair into a bun, poured a cup of coffee, and sat at the kitchen table. Colleen looked into the dark liquid and felt like the answer she craved was hiding in such blackness. She watched the steam rise from the cup. It reminded her of incense and she hoped it was working the same, carrying her prayers and pleas to Heaven.

Colleen cradled the cup in her hands, feeling the warmth and sturdiness. This gave her the courage to ask the question again — deep breath in, slow exhale out — softly and sincerely she whispered, "Let me hear Your voice, Lord. What must I do to spend eternity in Heaven with You?" She took her time with more slow, deep, deliberate breathing exercises, eyes closed, and stillness all around the quiet kitchen. Peace and stillness. Oneness with God. No distractions.

Colleen opened her eyes and realized that this time the hum of the refrigerator had disappeared. The long lists that usually distracted her mind were gone. She smiled and thanked the Lord. She could feel Him looking at her and loving her. She sensed this was a turning point in her life. "You are speaking to my heart!" she mused. The realization seemed so clear now! How did she not see or hear or feel it before? She slowly drank her coffee, embracing this new perspective, this new openness.

Refilling her cup, Colleen grabbed a pen and paper. Across the top she wrote, "What must I do to spend eternity in Heaven with You?" She capitalized the "Y" in "You" to indicate God. Then she listed several ways to know Him: "Father, Son, Holy Spirit, God, Savior, Jesus, Messiah, Friend, Guide, Wisdom." She surveyed her list, praying each name with the gentle breath of love.

Next, she added the date in the upper right-hand corner: 10/10/21. This will be an important date to remember. It even looks important and sturdy with the double "tens." She guessed this list will evolve and grow throughout the rest of her life. "

You are the one, Lord!" she praised!

Colleen doodled a row of hearts across the page then began a new list. She titled it: "Truth Commandments"

- 1) *Make time for morning prayer and time with the Lord.*
- 2) *Bring life with your smile into every room you enter..*
- 3) *Build up others and focus on their gifts, not their flaws.*
- 4) *Speak about others just as you want others to speak about you.*
- 5) *Acknowledge the times you're not your best, and work to repair the damage.*
- 6) *Pick up the phone and call someone who is struggling and lonely.*
- 7) *Sit with loved ones and learn from them, especially the elderly.*
- 8) *Let go of things no longer of use to you, and give them to someone in need.*
- 9) *Do work that brings you joy and makes the world a better place.*
- 10) *Give more love than you receive.*

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