

Self-Examination: Excerpts from St. Augustine's Prayer Book

PRIDE is putting self in the place of God as the center and objective of our life, or of some department thereof. It is the refusal to recognize our status as creatures, dependent on God for our existence, and placed by him in a specific relationship to the rest of his creation.

Presumption. Dependence on self rather than on God, with the consequent neglect of the means of grace, sacraments and prayer. Dispensation of ourselves from ordinary duties on the grounds that we are superior persons. Preference for own ideas, customs, schemes or techniques. Foolish optimism.

Failure to recognize our job as a divine vocation, or to offer our work to God. Unwillingness to surrender to abide in Christ, to let him act in and through us. Failure to offer God regularly in intercession the persons or causes that have, or should enlist our interest and support.

Distrust. Refusal to recognize God's wisdom, providence and love. Worry, anxiety, misgivings, scrupulosity, or perfectionism. Over-sensitiveness. Expectation that others will dislike, reject, or mistreat us; over-readiness so to interpret their attitude, or quickness to take offense. Unfounded suspicions.

Disobedience. Rejection of God's known will in favor of our own interests or pleasures. Disobedience of the legitimate (and therefore divinely ordained) laws, regulations or authority of the church, state, parents, teachers, etc.; or slow and reluctant obedience. Failure when in authority to fulfill responsibilities or consider the best interests of those under us. Absorption in our own affairs, leaving little time, energy or interest for the things of God.

Vanity. Crediting to ourselves rather than to God our talents, abilities, insights, accomplishments, good works. Refusal to admit indebtedness to others, or adequately to express gratitude for their help.

Hypocrisy. Pretense to virtues we do not possess. False humility. Harsh judgment on others for faults we excuse in ourselves. Boasting, exaggeration, drawing attention to ourselves by talking too much, by claiming ability, wisdom, experience, or influence we do not have, or by eccentric or ostentatious behavior. Undue concern over, or expenditure of time, money, or energy on looks, dress, surroundings, etc., in order to impress others; or deliberate slovenliness for the same purpose. Seeking, desiring or relishing flattery or compliments.

Arrogance. Insisting that others conform to our wishes, recognize our leadership, accept our own estimate of our worth. Being overbearing, argumentative, opinionated, obstinate.

Snobbery. Pride over race, family, position, personality, education, skill, achievements or possessions.