

Mark 7:21: "From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. 23 All these evils come from within, and they defile."

These words of Jesus must be understood in context. He speaks them in response to the traditions of the elders and Pharisees, which, in some cases, violated the Ten Commandments. In fact, Jesus specifically mentions the Fourth Commandment, highlighting how the tradition of "Qorban" violated the command to honor one's father and mother. Against this background, Jesus reveals the deeper cause of these violations: the sinfulness present in all human beings, which the Catholic Church refers to as "concupiscence." If left unchecked, this tendency toward sin will lead us to violate the Ten Commandments which is basically a pathway to God.

The 13 vices listed by Jesus in Mark 7:21-23 are closely connected to violations of the Ten Commandments, as they represent *attitudes and behaviors* that go against *God's moral law*. Each of these vices reflects a deeper *sinfulness rooted in the human heart*, and they can be seen as transgressions of specific commandments.

1. Evil Thoughts (διαλογισμοί πονηροί, dialogismoι poneroi)

Etymology: δια-λογίζομαι means "to think through or reason" + πονηρός derived from a root meaning "pain, toil," later associated with moral evil. *Deliberate evil plan*.

Related Commandment: **The First Commandment** ("You shall have no other gods before me").

Explanation: Evil thoughts, especially those that lead to sinful actions, reflect a rejection of God's sovereignty and a turn toward selfish desires or idolatry of the self. They can also underlie any violation of the commandments.

Modern Relevance: Harmful or destructive thought patterns, including judgment, manipulation, or toxic reasoning, that lead to immoral actions.

2. Unchastity (πορνείαι, porneiai) – Sexual Immorality

Etymology: Derived from πόρνη (prostitute), its broader meaning it encompasses all forms of sexual immorality that violate the moral law of the time, which would have included homosexual behavior, along with adultery, fornication, and prostitution.

Related Commandments: **The Sixth Commandment** ("You shall not commit adultery") and **The Ninth Commandment** ("You shall not covet your neighbor's wife").

Explanation: This vice encompasses all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, fornication, and other violations of chastity, which directly violate these commandments.

Modern Relevance: Unchastity today refers to a disregard for sexual ethics, including infidelity, pornography, or any form of sexual exploitation, often leading to broken relationships.

3. Theft (κλεῖαι, kleiai)

Etymology: From the verb κλέπτω (to steal).

Related Commandment: **The Seventh Commandment** ("You shall not steal").

Explanation: Theft is a direct violation of this commandment, as it involves taking something that belongs to another person without permission.

Modern Relevance: Theft includes not just stealing physical objects, but also intellectual property theft, fraud, and dishonest business practices.

4. Murder (φόνοι, phonoi)

Etymology: Related to φοβέω (to frighten), it emphasizes an act of intentional harm.

Related Commandment: **The Fifth Commandment** ("You shall not kill").

Explanation: Murder is the ultimate violation of the sanctity of life, which is protected by the Fifth Commandment.

Modern Relevance: Murder remains a grave crime, but it also manifests in subtler ways, such as character assassination, hatred, or neglect leading to death.

5. Adultery (μοιχεῖαι, moicheiai)

Etymology: Derived from *μοιχός* (adulterer), emphasizing betrayal of a marital covenant.

Related Commandment: The Sixth Commandment ("You shall not commit adultery").

Explanation: Adultery is explicitly condemned in the Sixth Commandment, violating the fidelity owed to one's spouse.

Modern Relevance: Adultery undermines trust in relationships and leads to the destruction of families, both in personal and societal contexts.

6. Greed (πλεονεξία, pleonexiai)

Etymology: From *πλέον* (more) and *ἔχω* (to have), meaning "having more."

Related Commandments: The Tenth Commandment ("You shall not covet your neighbor's goods") and **The Seventh Commandment** ("You shall not steal").

Explanation: Greed is a disordered desire for material possessions or wealth, which leads to coveting what belongs to others and, in some cases, stealing.

Modern Relevance: Greed is rampant in consumerism, exploitation of resources, and the endless pursuit of wealth at the cost of others' well-being.

7. Malice (πονηρία, ponēria)

Etymology: Related to *πονηρός*, it describes a disposition towards harm or evil.

Related Commandment: The Fifth Commandment ("You shall not kill").

Explanation: Malice refers to the desire to harm others, whether through violence, deception, or slander. It's a violation of the respect for life and dignity of others.

Modern Relevance: Malice can be seen in deliberate harm to others, whether through speech, actions, or attitudes of resentment.

8. Deceit (δόλος, dolos)

Etymology: Rooted in a word meaning "to bait" or "to trap," it signifies deliberate misleading.

Related Commandment: The Eighth Commandment ("You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor").

Explanation: Deceit involves lying and dishonesty, which directly violate the commandment against bearing false witness.

Modern Relevance: Deception is prevalent in politics, media, marketing, and personal relationships, where truth is distorted for personal gain.

9. Licentiousness (ἀσελγεία, aselgeia)

Etymology: The word is connected to shamelessness or extreme indulgence.

Related Commandments: The Sixth Commandment ("You shall not commit adultery") and **The Ninth Commandment** ("You shall not covet your neighbor's wife").

Explanation: Licentiousness refers to shameless behavior, especially in sexual matters, which violates the commandments concerning purity and the proper use of human sexuality.

Modern Relevance: It describes behaviors where moral restraints are disregarded, such as in hedonistic lifestyles or public disregard for decency.

10. Envy (ὄφθαλμὸς πονηρός, ophthalmos ponēros)

Etymology: In ancient contexts, an "evil eye" was thought to curse or harm others through envy.

Related Commandment: The Tenth Commandment ("You shall not covet your neighbor's goods").

Explanation: Envy is the sinful desire for what others have, whether material possessions, status, or relationships. It leads to coveting, which violates the Tenth Commandment.

Modern Relevance: Envy leads to resentment and dissatisfaction, especially in the age of social media, where comparisons breed discontent.

11. Blasphemy (βλασφημία, blasphēmia)

Etymology: From *βλάπτω* (to harm) and *φημί* (to speak), it means "harmful speech."

Related Commandment: The Second Commandment ("You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain").

Explanation: Blasphemy is disrespectful or irreverent speech against God or sacred things, which directly violates the commandment to honor God's name.

Modern Relevance: Blasphemy manifests in derogatory language about religion or sacred things, but also in defaming others' dignity or beliefs.

12. Arrogance (ὕπερηφανία, hyperēphania)

Etymology: From *ὑπέρ* (above) and *φαίνω* (to show), meaning "showing oneself above others."

Related Commandments: The First Commandment ("You shall have no other gods before me") and **The Fifth Commandment** ("Honor your father and mother").

Explanation: Arrogance or pride exalts oneself above others and even above God, violating the First Commandment. It can also be a lack of respect for authority and elders, including parents, violating the Fifth Commandment.

Modern Relevance: Arrogance is visible in self-centeredness, narcissism, and a lack of humility in public and private life.

13. Folly (ἀφροσύνη, aphrosynē)

Etymology: From *ἄ-φρων* (without reason), denoting thoughtlessness or reckless behavior.

Related Commandment: The First Commandment ("You shall have no other gods before me").

Explanation: Folly, in a biblical sense, refers to moral foolishness and disregard for God's wisdom. It is a rejection of God's law, and as such, violates the First Commandment by placing one's own wisdom or desires above God's.

Modern Relevance: Foolishness can be seen in impulsive, reckless decisions without moral consideration, often leading to self-destruction.