

## Moral Inventory Guide

The idea of a "moral inventory" is to take stock of yourself; your personality traits. We must quit lying to ourselves and have the courage to look thoroughly and honestly at all of our personal characteristics.

The object of this inventory is to discover which character traits we allow to control us. These defects in our character lock us up, steal our joy, and block God's blessings. Only by identifying and systematically eliminating these unwanted traits can we live the life God has planned for us.

This inventory is a voyage of self discovery. It allows us to discover who we are and why we behave like we do. The following questions allow us to reflect on how our personalities developed.

As you answer these questions, patterns should emerge. These patterns in feelings and behavior will show how certain personality traits developed in our lives. Ultimately, we want to discover those traits that no longer serve us well. Only then can we work on eliminating them.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS BE WRITTEN DOWN. This helps trigger the release of feelings and memories. A strictly mental exercise will do you little or no good. You will need to write out all resentments, fears, hates and hang-ups that you can remember. LIST SEPARATELY EACH OF YOUR CHARACTER DEFECTS AS THEY SURFACE. The list at the end may help you.

Answer these questions completely and honestly. Try to look at yourself clinically, as if you are looking at another person because, in a way, you are. The person you become will be happier and more fulfilled than the person you leave behind.

1. Were you wanted at birth? In what ways did you learn this and how did you feel about it?
2. Were you an only child? If so, how did you feel about this? Did you resent it or enjoy it? If not, how old were you at the birth of brothers and sisters? How did you feel about the new arrivals?
3. Did you grow up in a home with both parents? If not, describe the circumstances. How did you feel?
4. Were you closer to one parent than the other? Do you still have unresolved issues with one or both parents?
5. In your home, was there laughter, arguing, depression? Describe what you can remember of your early home life, and the feelings that were frequent.
6. Describe what you THINK your family thought of you.
7. How did your parents punish you? Did they try to reason, or was it physical? How did you react to punishment? What were you punished for most?
8. What kind of marriage do you THINK your parents had? If they fought, did you resent it? Did it scare you? Were you used to breaking up their fights? Were you encouraged to (or did you take) one side or the other? Were they so close you couldn't feel a part of them?
9. Did your family move often? Did you make friends and then have to break off the relationships? Were you afraid to get too close?
10. Did you get in many fights? Were you afraid to fight? Were you afraid NOT to fight? Did you feel pressure from parents, brothers, sisters or others on this subject?

11. Did your appearance (looks, dress, etc.) embarrass you? Did you feel that you were "different" from your classmates?
12. List the first time you stole anything. Inventory all your thefts. Why did you first steal? How did you feel about it afterwards?
13. How old were you when you first masturbated? Were you ever caught and made to feel guilty? Did you feel guilty even though you weren't caught?
14. Did you have friends? What kind of friend were you? What kind of friends did you have?
15. Were you undependable as a friend - breaking off relationships without any explanation when something or someone who seemed better came along?
16. Were you jealous or envious of others? For what reasons?
17. How did you get the attention of your family (Did you pout, sulk, be a good child, have temper tantrums, etc.)?
18. Do you remember the kind of lies you told? What did your parents do when they caught you lying? How did you feel when you got caught lying?
19. Were you ashamed of your parents? Were they too old, too fat, too sloppy, too drunk, too whatever?
20. Were you the kind of child you would want to have?
21. Some girls are taught that men are only interested in sex, and some boys that they must be the greatest of all time. Have you experienced either of these attitudes? Is there a pattern? How has it affected you?

22. What was the best experience you had? The worst? In school? At home? In public? With friends? With your family?
23. What was the MOST embarrassing incident of adolescence? Were there any others that you really remember?
24. Do you gossip or cut other people down? Do you make up things about other people's behavior? Is it to feel superior to them? Do you do it to get ahead, to remove the competition? Relate any incidents of this behavior. Were you put down by parents, boyfriends/girlfriends, etc.?
25. Do you use people to get what you want? Do you pretend to be their friend as long as you want something, then dump them when you have gotten what you wanted? Write out any instances of this type.
26. Do you feel superior because you have more education, brains, money, social background, job or any other seeming advantages? List your feelings of superiority.
27. Do you feel inferior because you have any less of any of the above? List your feelings of inferiority.
28. Do you think you are superior to the general run of people? List in what ways you are different.
29. Is your personal appearance particularly careless and sloppy, or prideful and vain?
30. On sight, do you judge people by their appearance? Do you form an opinion of them because they look sloppy, neat, preppie, freak, or punk?
31. Do you avoid looking at yourself by making statements like "at least I'm not that messed up"; or "others do it too"? List instances of this.

32. Are you still judging the outside of others by the inside of yourself? Give some examples of this from your own experiences.
33. Do you argue with people? Is it important for you to be "right"? Do you become angry when people don't see things the way you do? Relate incidents and your feelings about them.
34. Are you scornful of or put down ideas that aren't your own? Elaborate on this.
35. Do you resent others who don't seem to have problems finding happiness? Have you bothered to ask people who seem happy how they got that way?
36. What things do you feel greedy, envious, or angry about?
37. How do you presently get people's attention? Pouting, sulking, temper tantrums, being extra good (and letting them know it), frustrating others' activities, complaining so that others know how bad you feel? What reactions do you get most frequently? Can you tell why you feel the need to do this?
38. Do you tell others how bad you are? (This is pride in reverse; a good tool if you like self pity and depression). Or do you go to the other extreme and tell people how great you are? (A good way to give yourself a false sense of security; however, when the security topples you are back in depression). What do you tell others about yourself?
39. Do you have the need to "one up" everyone? Do you always have a better story to tell? Why do you do this?
40. What kind of things do you lie about most? How do you feel when lying? Do you almost believe your own lies? What do you get from lying?
41. Are you a tightwad or stingy? Do you spend money with no thought for tomorrow? How do you handle your money?

42. What are your fears concerning money?
43. In work relationships, write out your resentments toward bosses and co-workers.
44. List all the negative feelings you have about people in your work life.
45. Do you over rate yourself and play the "big shot"?
46. Do you feel that no one really understands you? (If they only knew what you had been through they wouldn't expect so much from you).
47. Have you reacted with frustration in sexual matters? In what
  - a. In what situations or events are you sexually frustrated?
48. When denied sex, do you become angry or depressed?
49. Have you been involved in an affair, even an imaginary one? How close have you come to having an affair?
50. If you are or have been involved in a relationship with a cold and unloving person, ask yourself why you chose that person. Is that person like one of your parents? Are you trying to get the love that you didn't get from that parent through someone like them?
51. Did you have sex earlier or later than your peer group? How do you feel about that? How do you feel about that first relationship?
52. Do you feel you entered your first relationship for the right reasons? Were you honest with yourself about what you wanted or expected? Were your expectations reasonable?

53. If you are or were married, why did you get married? Was it for the right reasons? Did you marry earlier or later than your peer group? Do you, or did you resent the responsibilities of marriage and family?
54. If you are not married, why not?
55. Do you use sex as a punishment or reward? Why?
56. What is your sex life like? Is it as mature as you would like it to be? Are you careless of your partner's feelings?
57. Write out your idea of a healthy sex life. Why isn't YOUR sex life like that?
58. Are you afraid of being sexually rejected? Are you ashamed of your body or the way you look? Write out what's wrong with you. Who told you what was wrong with you? Why do you believe them?
59. Write out the things about yourself that you are ashamed of, and why.
60. If you are divorced, or getting one, write out the negative feelings about your relationship with your spouse and children.
61. If married, write out EXACTLY how you feel about your spouse and children.
62. Is your family living up to your expectations? What ARE your expectations? Are they reasonable?
63. How do you think you would be different if your family were out of your life? In what ways do they affect the person you are?

64. Have you been so busy trying to make money that your family sees little of you? Do you say "I give my family everything they want, but they are never satisfied"?
65. How much time do you spend with your family? Do you take at least one night a week for the family only? What do you do together? Is the time spent in fun or fighting?
66. Define love. What do you feel it is?
67. Are you working to build your ego? Describe the difference between ego and self-esteem.
68. If you are married and your spouse turns cold, do you spend more time with him or her, or do you turn to someone more understanding?
69. What is your greatest fear, relating to your family? Your  
a. friends? School or work? The future?
70. Are you afraid of getting too close to another person for the fear of being rejected? Do you reject others before they can reject you? What are your fears in this regard?
71. Do you find yourself punishing others the way your parents punished you? In what ways?
72. Are you cold and indifferent to your family, friends, work, your own needs? What do you get from this? What fear keeps you from trying something different?
73. Are you hostile because you don't like the hand life has dealt you? Did you think your life would turn out differently? In what ways?
74. What are your present fears? List them.

75. Resentment is caused by failed expectations. Unresolved resentment breeds bitterness, which leads to depression. List your greatest resentment.
76. If revenge were possible right now, who would be the top people on your list? Why?
77. As children, we develop ways to avoid being hurt by others. These methods rarely work as adults. What methods do you still use to avoid being hurt?
78. Which childish behaviors do you use to get what you want from others? Do they still work?
79. What are your hopes and goals?
80. What do you like most about yourself?
81. What do you like least about yourself?
82. What do you THINK people think of you? Do they think you are rude, obnoxious, boring, fun-loving, outlandish, refined, impulsive, shy, up-tight, driven, or angry? How do YOU see yourself? Who is right?
83. In what ways are you a responsible person?
84. Are you a perfectionist? In what ways does this manifest itself?
85. Are you easily offended? Why?
86. What social situations make you uncomfortable? Why?

87. Do you enjoy being the center of attention? Are you a show-off? Do others look to you for leadership or do you just take it?
88. What are your obsessions or compulsions? How do they manifest themselves?
89. Are you addicted to ANYTHING? Drugs, alcohol, sex, money, television, exercise, the internet?
90. What do you waste more time worrying about; the future or the past?
91. What kinds of things still stir guilt feelings in you?
92. Looking at both the past and the present, what situations have caused you anxiety, bitterness, frustration, or depression? Is there a pattern?
93. Appraising each situation fairly, can you see where you have been at fault? Did these things upset you because of selfishness or unreasonable demands?
94. If your anxiety was seemingly caused by the behavior of others, ask yourself: why am I unable to accept conditions I cannot change?

The most common symptoms of emotional insecurity are resentment, worry, anger, self pity and depression. Resentment often causes the most damage to ourselves and others. Consider carefully all personal relationships which bring continuous or recurring troubles.

Things that offend us, or cause resentment, anger, or uneasiness can often be traced to a particular character defect. For example, in order to feel good about himself, a perfectionist must see order reflected in the world around him. Disorder brings uneasiness. A person that demands control may become angry or resentful when he is unable to control his environment.

Many of us have so much shame about our past we wince at the memories. The past controls who we are today, because we can't seem to shake how we feel about it. A personal inventory helps release us from our past. Owning up to who we are is the first step toward putting the past behind us, once and for all. Only then can we begin living the abundant life that God promises His people.

The following is a list of defective character traits and what those defects steal from us. Each group of character traits should be considered as a whole. Individual traits on the left do not necessarily correspond to individual traits on the right.

## CHARACTER TRAITS

### These defects:

false pride

vanity

arrogance

perfectionism

egotism

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envy

jealousy

distrust

dissatisfaction

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dishonesty

rationalization

manipulation

people-pleasing

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self-pity

pessimism

despair

over-sensitivity

self-hatred

low self-esteem

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### Rob us of:

humility

modesty

gratitude

acceptance

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happiness

kindness

sincerity

trust

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authenticity

genuineness

integrity

joy

•

courage

strength

hope

optimism

self-reliance

confidence

•

greed

overindulgence

selfishness

gluttony

•

hostility

indignation

need to control

•

sloth

sloppiness

irresponsibility

•

intolerance

opinionated

overbearing

sarcasm

•

sexually abusive

indecent

uncaring spirit

self-gratification

infidelity

generosity

hospitality

moderation

•

compassion

peace

•

spirit

pride

accomplishment

•

tolerance

patience

empathy

•

respect

decency

restraint

consideration

sincerity