



## We All Do Stupid Things

**Read:** Matthew 5:17-37

In the gospel Jesus gives us a rather long and challenging list of behaviours to avoid. His teachings on anger, adultery, divorce, lying and vengeance become the standard of conduct for his disciple. But at the heart of the supposed strict prohibitions, is really an invitation to live a life of peace and harmony with our neighbour and with God.

**What does this mean for us?** There isn't a single one of us who has not lied, stolen something, wanted (and perhaps got) revenge, cheated on a high school crush, let our eyes wander (maybe even our minds), or ended up in a tragic situation we never thought we would find ourselves. That is life. It is part of the human condition. The Church calls it concupiscence, which is simply our natural tendency to, well, do something stupid. Call it original sin, selfishness, ego, whatever; it all boils down to the destruction of our peaceful relations.

Jesus tells us that the path to peace is not found in a lying tongue, a cheating heart, or a vengeful spirit. All of these activities inevitably harm our lives and the lives of those around us. Jesus warns us that sin is a destructive force. It is like rolling a snowball down a hill. It starts off small, but as it gains momentum and size, it can cause a lot of damage. Sin is very harmful, and it can cause all kinds of problems. That is why Jesus sternly warns us to avoid certain behaviours.

**What do I want you to do?** There are two things we can do to avoid sin and live in peace. The **first** is to regularly examine our conscience. This can help us identify destructive and sinful patterns. Coupled with daily prayer, this is a powerful tool for avoiding sin. The **second** is to forgive those who have hurt us and be reconciled with those we have hurt. Jesus reminds us that reconciliation is the path to peace.