

How the minor sins progress into major ones (Saint Nicodemus the Hagiorite)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



[Previous Publication: <http://pemptousia.com/2016/06/lesser-sins/>]

...We must therefore avoid the sins which are considered minor. Because if, on the one hand we wish to please God, and on the other fall into these 'lesser' sins, it's as if we wish to unite heaven and hell, light and darkness, fire and water, or sanctity and wickedness. However minor these sins appear to be, they bear serious weight, since they're an affront to our holy God. Because the greatest evil which is addressed to created beings is as nothing compared to any addressed to the Creator.

Let's be ashamed, then, for accepting into our heart, without objection, anything that God doesn't want. Let's reject a thousand times the laxity we've shown so far in observing His commandments and let's resolve not merely to avoid committing these minor sins but to root out from our heart any inclination towards them. And if sometimes we do indeed fall, from the weakness of our nature and will, let's not allow our heart to come to love them. Let's quickly hate them, let's repent, confess and beseech God to strengthen us with His Grace so that we won't fall again.



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Let's now consider the host of evils that the 'lesser' sins give rise to in our soul. In the same way as an illness, even if it's not important, weakens the body, so these minor sins weaken the soul and deprive it of some of its inclination to the good. Every sin, however small it may seem, separates us from Christ, as the Prophet says: 'Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God' (Is. 59, 2). Even the minor, venial sin cools the love, mortifies the devotion, withers the compunction, dries up the tears, atrophies the repentance and prevents the Grace of God from visiting us. The worst thing is, however, that these minor sins quickly become greater, mortal ones and destroy us wretched people completely. Firstly, because they drain the good intentions of the soul; secondly, because they're a hindrance to God in strengthening and fortifying us; and thirdly because the accustom the will to incline easily to wickedness.

Let's see, now, how these minor sins progress into major ones.

It seems a small thing, for example, to look carelessly at a beautiful face. But let's count the sins that are engendered by that. The observation of the beauty of the face engenders an affliction; the affliction a pleasurable connection; the connection consent; consent the fall; the fall habit; habit addiction; addiction need; need despair; and despair hell!

So you see from just this one example the long chain of sins which are engendered by what you call 'lesser' ones. If people don't pay attention to small things, they

won't get the big ones right, as the Holy Spirit says in the Wisdom of Sirach: 'Those who ignore the small things are gradually destroyed' (19, 1).

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