



SAINT THEOPHAN ON SAVING YOUR SOUL

Saint Theophan the Recluse of Russia offers the following words on the essential steps to saving our soul:

- 1) Repent, and turn to the Lord, admit your sins, weep for them, with heartfelt contrition, and confess them before your spiritual father. Vow in word and in your heart before the face of the Lord not to offend Him further with your sins.
 - 2) Then by abiding in God in mind and heart, endeavour to, fulfil in body the duties and affairs which your station in life imposes upon you.
 - 3) In this labour most of all guard your heart from evil thoughts and feelings - pride, vainglory, anger, judging of others, hatred, envy, scorn, despondency, attachment to things and people, scattered thoughts, anxiety, all sensual pleasures and everything that separates the mind and heart from God.
 - 4) In order to stand firm in this labour, resolve beforehand not to: withdraw from what you recognize to be necessary, even if it may, mean death. To achieve this, when you first resolve to do so, offer your life to God in order to live not for your own sake, but for God alone.
 - 5) A support for life in this manner is a humble offering of one's self to the will of God, and not depending on one's self; the spiritual arena in which this life is accomplished is patience or an unswerving stand in the ranks of redeemed life, with a cheerful endurance
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- 5) A support for life in this manner is a humble offering of one's self to the will of God, and not depending on one's self; the spiritual arena in which this life is accomplished is patience or an unswerving stand in the ranks of redeemed life, with a cheerful endurance of all the labours and unpleasantness that are linked with this.
- 6) A support for patience is faith, or the assurance that, working in this way for God, you are His servant and He is your Master, Who sees your efforts, is gladdened by them and values them; hope that the help of God which is ever protecting you, is always ready and waiting for you, and will descend upon you in your time of need, that God will not forsake you to the end of your life, and preserving you as one faithful to His commandments here, among all temptations, He will lead you through death to His eternal Kingdom; love, which meditates day and night upon the beloved Lord, In every way strives to do only what is pleasing to Him, and avoids everything that might offend Him in thought, word or deed.
- 7) The weapons of such a life are: prayers in church and at home, especially mental prayer, fasting according to one's strength and the rules of the Church, vigilance, solitude, physical labours, frequent confession of sins, Holy Communion, reading of the Word of God and the writings of the Holy Fathers, conversations with God-fearing people, frequent consultation with one's spiritual father about all the events of one's internal and external life. The foundation of all these labours in measure, time and place is wisdom, with the counsel of those who are experienced.
- 8) Guard yourself with fear. For this remember the end - death, judgment, hell, the heavenly Kingdom.
Most of all be attentive to yourself: preserve a sober mind and an untroubled heart.
- 9) Set as a final goal the kindling of the fire of the spirit, so that the spiritual fire will burn in your heart and, gathering up all your strength into one, will begin to build

your inner man and finally burn up the tares of your sins and passions.
Arrange your life in this manner, and with God's grace you will be saved.

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