



### ***St. Theophan the Recluse - Sayings***

- "God abandons no one. For Him all are children. None are stepchildren. And the hard occasions and situations - all is sent for our benefit."
- "Attention to that which transpires in the heart and proceeds from it - this is the chief activity of the proper Christian life."
- "You must watch after yourself."
- "Descend with your attention into the heart, stand there before the Lord and admit nothing sinful to enter there. In this is the entire activity of inner warfare."
- "Mercilessness to oneself, readiness to perform any favor to others and the surrender of oneself entirely to the Lord with a prayerful abiding in Him - these are the creators of the spiritual life."
- "You must kill egoism. If you don't kill it yourself, then the Lord, hammer-blow after hammer-blow, shall send various misfortunes, so as to crush this stone."
- "Self-pleasing and self-pity testify that in the heart abides the ego, and not the Lord."
- "Vain fussing about is not made up of many tasks, but of the manner in which they are carried out. When one is being carried out and hundreds jostle in your head. You must chase all those out, and carry out the one task, and do it with your hands at that, while with your mind abide in your place."
- "A Christian without zeal is a poor Christian."
- "Divine determination depends on the life of a man, and not his life upon the determination."



SAINT  
THEOPHANES

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RECLUSE

## ***St. Theophan A Rule For Reading:***

- 1) Before reading you should empty your soul of everything;
- 2) Arouse the desire to know about what is being read;
- 3) Turn prayerfully to God;
- 4) Follow what you are reading with attention and place everything in your open heart;
- 5) If something did not reach the heart, stay with it until it reaches;
- 6) You should, of course, read quite slowly.

Stop reading when the soul no longer wants to nourish itself with reading. That means it is full. If the soul finds one passage utterly stunning, stop there and read no more.

The best time for reading the Word of God is in the morning. Lives of Saints after the mid-day meal, and Holy Fathers before going to sleep. Thus you can take up a little bit each day.

During such occupations, you should continually keep in mind the main goal -- impressing the truth on yourself and awakening the spirit. If reading or discourse does not bring this about, then they are but idle itchings of the tongue and ears, or empty discussion. If it is done with intelligence, then the truths impress themselves and rouse the spirit, and one thing aids the other. But if the reading or discourse digresses from the proper image, then there is neither one nor the others -- truth is stuffed into the head like sand, and the spirit becomes cold and hard, smokes over and puffs up.

Impressing the spirit is not the same as searching for it. This requires only that you clarify what the truth is, and hold it in your mind until they bond together. Let there be no deductions or limitations -- only the face of truth.

The easiest method for this could lawfully be considered the following: the whole truth is in the catechesis. Every morning take the truth from it and clarify it to yourself, carry it in your mind and nourish yourself with it for as long as it feeds the soul -- a day, two days or longer. Do the same thing with another truth, and continue thus to the end. This is a method that is easy and applicable to everyone. Those who do not know how to read may ask for one truth and proceed from there.

We can see that the rule for everyone is this: impress the truth in a way that will awaken you. The methods for fulfilling this rule vary, and it is not at all possible to prescribe the same one for everyone.

Thus, reading, listening and discourse that do not impress the truth or awaken the spirit should be considered wrong, as they lead away from the truth. It is a sickness to read many books out of curiosity alone, when only the mind follows what is being read, without leading it to the heart or delighting in its flavor.

This is the science of dreaming; it is not creative, does not hasten success, but is devastating and always leads to arrogance. All your work should be limited, as we have said, to the following: clarify the truth and hold it in the mind until the heart tastes of it. The Holy Fathers put it simply: remember it, hold it in the mind, and have it always before your eyes. END

*from St. Theophan the Recluse, "The Path to Salvation," (Platina, California: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1998), pp. 243 - 244, 247 - 250*

*And this on Prayer Rule from From: The Spiritual Life and How to Be Attuned to It*

A prayer rule for one who is on the path of a God-pleasing life You ask about a prayer rule. Yes, it is good to have a prayer rule on account of our weakness so that on the one hand we do not give in to laziness, and on the other hand we restrain our enthusiasm to its proper measure. The greatest practitioners of prayer kept a prayer rule. They would always begin with established prayers, and if during the course of these a prayer started on its own, they would put aside the others and pray that prayer. If this is what the great practitioners of prayer did, all the more reason for us to do so. Without established prayers, we would not know how to pray at all. Without them, we would be left entirely without prayer.

However, one does not have to do many prayers. It is better to perform a small number of prayers properly than to hurry through a large number of prayers, because it is difficult to maintain the heat of prayerful zeal when they are performed to excess.

I would consider the morning and evening prayers as set out in the prayer books to be entirely sufficient for you. Just try each time to carry them out with full attention and corresponding feelings. To be more successful at this, spend a little of your free time at reading over all the prayers separately. Think them over and feel them, so that when you recite them at your prayer rule, you will know the holy thoughts and feelings that are contained in them. Prayer does not mean that we just recite prayers, but that we assimilate their content within ourselves, and pronounce them as if they came from our minds and hearts.

After you have considered and felt the prayers, work at memorizing them. Then you will not have to fumble about for your prayer book and light when it is time to pray; neither will you be distracted by anything you see while you are performing your prayers, but can more easily maintain thoughtful petition toward God. You will see for yourself what a great help this is. The fact that you will have your prayer book with you at all times and in all places is of great significance. Being thus prepared, when you stand at prayer be careful to keep your mind from drifting and your feeling from coldness and indifference, exerting yourself in every way to keep your attention and to

spark warmth of feeling. After you have recited each prayer, make prostrations, as many as you like, accompanied by a prayer for any necessity that you feel, or by the usual short prayer. This will lengthen your prayer time a little, but its power will be increased. You should pray a little longer on your own especially at the end of your prayers, asking forgiveness for unintentional straying of the mind, and placing yourself in God's hands for the entire day.

You must also maintain prayerful attention toward God throughout the day. For this, as we have already mentioned more than once, there is remembrance of God; and for remembrance of God, there are short prayers.