

## Prayerful Life – Demitrios of Rostov Theophane

It is true that we cannot succeed in works without prayer. But works must be practised in addition to prayer and with the support of prayer. We must even pray for success in prayer. In practice the work of prayer is as essential as is the work of good actions.

To achieve all this, we must take pains over everything, and demonstrate continual diligence. It is the same as with a clock. When the clock goes well, it shows the correct time. For this, every little wheel and every other inside part must be whole, correctly positioned, and properly interconnected. It is the same with the internal mechanisms of our soul: like the hand of a clock, the aim of our spirit can be pointed to the right or wrong place. It is right when it points straight to God, and this is when all the parts of the soul are whole and are correctly oriented, so to speak, each performing their proper task.

But exactly what kind of good works are needed to support a life of prayer? What sort of prayerfully active life should the Christian arrange for himself. I will tell you this not in my own words, but in the words of Saint Demitrios of Rostov, who gives the following very concise instructions. I beg you to attend to this:

1. "Having risen from sleep," he says, "let your first thought be of God, your first word and prayer directed to God, creator and sustainer of your life, who has forever the power to kill or bring to life, to strike or to heal, to save or to let perish."
2. "Prostrate yourself and give thanks to God, who has wakened you from sleep, and has not allowed you to perish in your lawlessness, but patiently awaits your return."
3. "Make a turn to the better, by saying with the psalmist: 'I remembered the works of the Lord' (Psalm 76: 11 ), for the good Way to heaven cannot be properly trodden except by those who begin each day well."
4. "From early morning, be a Seraphim in prayer, a Cherubim in action, and an Angel in attitude."
5. "From this point in life onwards, waste no time, but attend only to what is necessary."
6. "In all your actions, all your words, all your deliberations, keep your mind in God: do not have anything in mind but Christ, so that no other image may touch your clean heart except the pure image of Christ, your God and Saviour."
7. "Arouse yourself to the love of God by every possible means, especially by repeating to yourself with the psalmist: 'My heart grew hot within me, and in my meditation a fire was kindled.'" (Psalm 38:4).
8. "If you wish to love God unceasingly, look on his presence continually with your inner eye, and for His sake abandon every evil deed, word, and thought. For this reason you must do everything honestly, speak honestly, and think honestly, humbly, and in awe of the Son."
9. "Meekness should go together with praise, humility and honesty."
10. "A quiet and humble word should be truthful and useful, but when you are silent, think over the words you are going to say. An idle or harmful word should never pass your lips."
11. "If you laugh, laugh always with a smile, and not too often."
12. "Be watchful in yourself against rage, arrogance, and argumentativeness. If you are angry, control yourself."
13. "Be always moderate in food and drink"
14. "Be generous in all things, and God will bless you while people will praise you."
15. "Death is the end of all things, so it should be always in your prayers."

You can see from this what a steady life is prescribed for the Christian man of prayer.

**"Prayer is the mother and daughter of virtue" St John Lestvichnik**