



in Spiritual Life
(12/7)

The prayer stages



The prayer stages and how do I live it?



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Preparation:
House of God's Love

Book Name: A Series of Principles in Spiritual Life.
The prayer Stages... **(1) Forcing stage.**

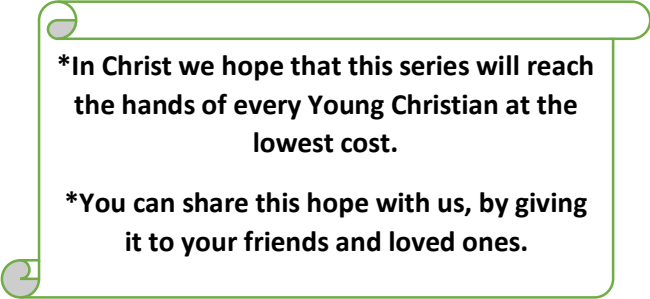
Preparation: Servants of the House of God's Love for
Expatriate students.

Translation & Cover design: Catherine Khalil.

Edition: Initial 2016.

Deposit Number: 7455/2016

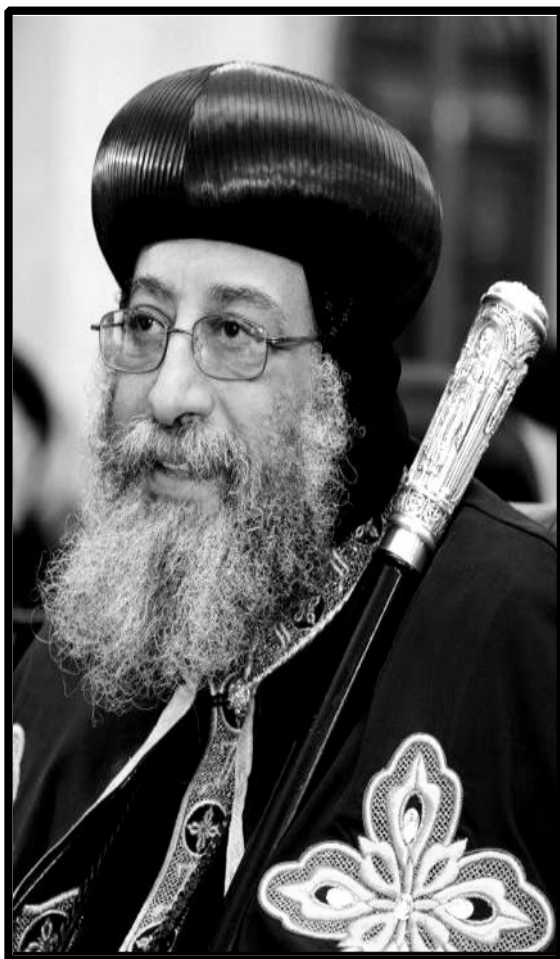
International numbering: I.S.B.N978-9779-03-859-9



***In Christ we hope that this series will reach
the hands of every Young Christian at the
lowest cost.**

***You can share this hope with us, by giving
it to your friends and loved ones.**

Note: To take full advantage of this series, please read the
full parts first in order, the lack of arrangement may cause
confusion and non-continuity may cause frustration.



His Holiness Pope Tawadros II

*Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of all
Africa on the Holy See of St. Mark the
Apostle (118)*

Introduction

Many complain that they are unable to sustain the same feelings and depth that they began with, in their spiritual lives in prayer, so they soon feel pixels and slacken, and if they overcome it, they get bored.

Frankly, all of this is perfectly normal, and an indicator of the correctness of the road, but because we don't know that! we blame ourselves for the loss of feelings, we leave the road completely and that is what Satan wants.

What are the stages of prayer? And how do we get through it successfully? What is God's look for us at every stage?

Knowing the route takes you to half way to the target, and the other half is to start walking and continue.

This digest goes halfway with you, the other half is to start and continue.

The Lord Jesus completes the path with you, without him, we can't do anything.

With the intercession of our Virgin Mother and the prayers of our Blessed Father, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II, and to our God, glory forever Amen.

On my way walking to meet my father, I started climbing a mountain that I have to climb until I get to the road that leads to the cave, and I was on this day late, that I wanted to get there quickly, so I started to speed up as if I was jumping up, and I was happy about it, but in a certain area I wasn't careful so I slipped down, and if it were for the grace of God I would have been missing, I thanked God. I remember the change and mood swings towards the climb of this mountain. At the beginning of coming to my father, I was very tired and bored, and at other times I didn't like to come, but now the situation has changed, the most beautiful thing in the way is the climb of the mountain, I remember Jesus when he went up the mountain and imagined hearing him calling for the Beatitudes, thank you Lord for the change of situation, and there I greeted my father and sat down, and discussed with him on the subject of the mountain and climbing, he said to me today we will talk about another mountain.

I said: What is it, Father?

It's better to step up gradually, better than doing things that are higher than your level, so you have to go down to your disgrace.

St. Theophan the recluse

He said: It is about the mountain of prayer, i.e. about the stages of climbing and growth in prayer.

I said: What are these stages, Father?

He said: Man, naturally likes speed, likes to jump as you jump on the mountain, but this way of jumping is very risky and its results are not guaranteed.

I said: What does this have to do with the stages of prayer, Father?

He said: Prayer is an act of the soul in which the soul and the body participate. We have to learn it gradually, but we want to jump like a frog.

I said: How, Father?

He said: We want to jump in the spiritual life and become saints in a day and night, and in the end we fall and shatter our feelings and frustrate our souls, and we stay a while in the fall until we heal or forget our failure and our frustration, then we return jumps after days or weeks and then fall and Etc..., so we remain uneducated then prayer and spiritual life in general becomes-for us- a difficult path, and a heavy burden we must do, and in our minds those who rejoice in prayer are monks and saints, while ordinary people are always stuck in tiredness and sadness all the days of their lives, either to be monks and devote themselves to prayer.

I said: This is really what I feel, and many of my friends and relatives too, so I don't know if there is anything else about prayer or spiritual life in general!!!!

He said: Yes, my son, this, unfortunately, what Satan has planted in the minds of most people, has made prayer difficult, tiring and monopoly on monks and saints.

But prayer is a language in which you address God, your Heavenly Father, as does the child address his father. And a way to express your love for him and to present your requests before him.

I said: How do we learn to pray, Father?

He said: Do you know how to ride a bicycle?

I said: Yes, Father.

He said: When you first rode the bicycle, did you run fast?

I said: of course not, but I fell once and many more until I learned.

He said: "But if they told you at home, "leave cycling, because you fall a lot, no more cycling, no more tiredness" And they feared for you. Were you learning?

I said: of course not.

He said: So we also need patience in everything, even in riding a bike, at first someone has to help and support you but you fall down a lot, then after a while you learned and depended on yourself and with a lot of practice you became a professional, and also can help others.

I said: Sure, Father.

He said: This is also how, my son, learns to pray. Prayer is also like language in learning it.

I said: How, Father?

He said: In prayer, we learn the language of God, and these need time, as we learn a new language we take time, in the beginning, we learn letters and rules, and this is the hardest stage and then we enter the middle stage, i.e. we speak well, but after a while we reach a stage of professionalism, and the more we practice the language, the more we learn it, and the more we are surrounded by those who speak the same language, the easier it is to learn. That's how you learn any hobby or a career. In all of this, we are patient, and those who are patient will learn, and those who are impatient will never learn and remain ignorant of this language or hobby.

So, my son, who practices prayer and puts himself in the middle of a church with constant prayers, and being patient, will learn the language of God automatically and easily. Those who are impatient will never learn and remain ignorant.

I said: But I'm impatient, Father, what shall I do?

He said: Strangely, my son, we are patient to learn many things, we are patient to learn in schools for many years to get a certificate, and be patient even in the supermarket to take care of the things of the body and life, but no, we want to be patient about the things of the spirit and eternity, the willingness to patience exists, but we make it easier with by saying "I don't have patience" to justify ourselves.

I said: Indeed, Father, you have brightened my mind at this point, I'm not impatient as I claim and delude myself, I am patient for many things, some of which are important and some of them are trivial, but why not be patient in prayer, Father?

He said: I will explain in detail the solution to this problem, prayer is stages, we grow and progress in it.

I said: What are the stages of prayer, Father?

He said: The first stage of prayer is

The Forcing Stage

It's the hardest stage, like a kid who wants to learn to walk, the first days for him is the hardest, I have to put pressure on myself and suppress my body so that I can learn. The most difficult stage in prayer is the stages of forcing.

I said: Why, Father?

He said: The difficulty of the stage of forcing is in three things:

First: (A war on the body side). Because the body likes laziness and play.

I said: How can we resist all these obstacles, Father?

He said: We resist the laziness of the body and its complacency with a very important principle which is

The principle of gradation

As Mar Isaac says, "As a point of thin water repeatedly falls over a hard rock that crumbles over time, so a constant little prayer frees us from the sag and laziness of the body.

A child in the third grade of primary school, have given a much of homework in the mid-year leave (before the introduction of the term system), Every morning his father was advised and then threatened and warned to accomplish his homework, "There is no play but after you finish the duty homework", "You will not succeed", "Vacation is going to end and you do nothing", and the poor child is trying, but the words of frustration afflict him despair, he stays in front of homework all day, but doesn't solve anything, and the vacation is nearly finished and it is almost not solved, but also didn't enjoy playing with his colleagues, then his uncle attended from Cairo, and was studying in the faculty of engineering, that began to encourage him and solve difficult issues and design for him a system to study every day in the morning, two hours and then play until noon, then take a break and study two hours more and play until the night, within three days he solved all his homework and enjoyed his vacation, then his uncle follow him until he excelled in his studies.

Strive to perform the prayer in the body (even if without depth) so God will grant you mercy and give you prayer in spirit (with depth and love)
St. Makarios the Great

So, in our spiritual life, my son, the principle of gradation is very important, and because Satan knows its importance

well, he tries and even strives fights us so that we don't use it, on the contrary, he uses it in his war with us.

I said: How, Father?

He said: Satan doesn't fight us with great sins or impure all at once!! No, but gradually in his war with us. A simple sin like just a word or just a look, then we complacency step by step till we get away from God, and stay away, then when we pay attention to ourselves, he says "Ha, ha... you have lost yourself a long time ago..."

Also, in prayer, you slacken day after day until you forget the prayer, he says to you, "Today you are tired, sleep and pray tomorrow, or these days you pray without feelings! You must pray in a right way or don't!! or Praying in the church, there is people look at you, and you don't know anyone there and most of them are hypocrites. "And Etc... till you don't pray. So, the Bible says "The little foxes that spoil the vines." (Song of Solomon 2:15) and Satan always uses this Phrase with you.

"Whether this or not!"

I said: How, Father?

He said: he tells you" Whether you pray deeply, or not",

" Whether you pray all the psalms, or not ", " Whether attend mass from the beginning, or not."

Then you respond to him and say:

This is better than nothing

To attend a part of the mass is better than not, and to pray a single psalm is better than not, so just going to the mass even if it is late, so the week after that you will go earlier, and when you pray a small part, with time you will get used to praying.

He's trying to make you incapable, so you don't go the spiritual path at all, He tries to make prayer difficult for you, so that you don't pray, and he says, "God will only accept it when you pray deeply, with feelings and tears, or he won't hear your prayers."

Don't make laziness whisper to you, that raising your mind, even once to God is useless, but know that its value is infinite, more than all the treasures of the world, because at times when we expel inaction and pour ourselves into the spiritual work diligently, the angels of heaven prepare us for the glorious wreath of predominance.

St. Theophan the Recluse

I said: Does God accept my prayers when they are without emotions, or feelings?

He said: This is the war of the soul, of course, my son, at the beginning of spiritual life, your prayers will be without emotions, or feelings, this is normal - you want to have a mustache and a beard at once- and become a saint!!

I said: Not a saint or anything, but to have feelings so That I know that God has responded and heard my prayers?

He said: We don't rely on feelings in our prayers, the feelings are variable, and these will be explained in detail when we talk about not relying on feelings, but God accepts my prayers because I'm his son and I speak to him and he listens to me

Accepting our prayers depends on perception, not feelings

I said: What to realize, Father?

Said:

1. The realization that you are a son who speaks to his father, and the realization that God loves you and hears every word you say, no matter how simple, and is pleased with that.

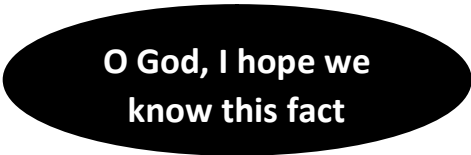
The little boy when he tells his father, his imaginary adventures with the bear and says to him "I ran behind the

bear and he runs and then I caught him and hit him hard", his father tells him with love and attention and then my dear

The child rejoices in his father's attention and continues "then he runs again and I run." "Does childish matters concern the father or what he cares about is his son and his son's joy and happiness?!

I said: Of course, the father doesn't care about these childish and trivial things, but what matters to him is his son and his happiness.

He said: Frankly, my son, all our things is childish for God, but he likes to hear them because we are his children



**O God, I hope we
know this fact**

(Matthew 18:3) and he loves us.

That we must go through childhood in spiritual life and God accepts us as young children and teaches us and accepts our weaknesses, and won't make us bear more than we can afford.

The Father will not ask or expect from his young son the same as he asks and expects from his eldest son, and God will not ask you for what he asks from St. Anthony or St. Paul, if we realize this truth, will rest in our prayers and speak to God as young children simply, calmly and joyfully.

I said: But I'm afraid that, if I become satisfied with being a child, that I'll be complacent, and say that I'm a child and I never grow in my spiritual life?

He said: If you accept your status as a child and turn yourself into Christ as a father and deal with him simply, he will lead you himself and teach you what to do now and what is beyond your power. Just as the child by his nature loves to be like his father and makes him happy, and in jealousy of his older brothers and tries to be like them, so you too, God will teach you everything step by step.

Prayer is the means of taking, and it is the hand by which we receive all the goodness taken from God as from an inexhaustible source.

St. Theophan the Recluse

I said: What else should I realize?

He said: **2- Also realize that he hears you no matter what your feelings.**

Imagine that you woke up and before you washed your face and your hair's a mess and you were in a hurry because you had an exam, and you needed money so you said to your father , "I need money, Father." Will he tell you, boy, what is this lack of manners? Talk to your father and your hair is in a mess and without washing your face?!! learn respect, wash your face, comb your hair and don't forget the perfume and gel, then you come and ask me with respect and cleanliness (here Father said to me: can your father tells you so?)

I said (smiling): Of course not, he will help me and prepares my clothes and tools, and I said (with emotion), I don't really forget when I was in my sixth elementary school, I was late for the exam, so my father quickly prepared the clothes and put on the shoes to me by himself, then he patted on me and says, "Slowly. Slowly don't be afraid."

He said: If the human father is like this, how much is the love and tenderness that created mercy and tenderness in the hearts of human beings.

Also, if you are sick and can't



Speak, no feelings or words, will he hear you? Does he will tell stand up to talk to your father or even sit respectfully!! How you talk to me while you're lying down, you're not polite?

I said: of course not, but if I like to get up, he says stay comfortable and bring me food in bed and feed me by himself.

He said:

Just as there are times when our bodies get sick and our parents take care of us and accept our weakness, so there are times when our souls go sick and our souls get tired and there are no feelings or words, yet we are accepted and God cares for us.

But we're

Accept that the body gets sick and don't realize that the soul can get sick as well. We accept that the father appreciates and helps his son's illness, and we don't accept that God appreciates the disease of our soul and helps us to go through this stage and heal.

3- Also, realize what you are saying and that you mean it.

Not that you worship God with your lips and your mind in somewhere else, and your thoughts are distracted.

I said: I'm being fought by being distracted too much in prayer, is God not listening to me?

He said: As we

mentioned before, son, **there is a difference between war with sin and falling into sin,** the

distraction fights you while you reject it and ask God to

save you from it, you are trying and God bless you

and support you. While those who accept that

their prayers should be reciting words that don't

understand their meanings, he says thank you, Lord, and

within him, he complains, he says, "I love you, Lord", and he is in a state of coldness, and satisfied with that, so his

Wars of Forced Stage

Body
War

Self-
war

Spirit
war

laziness

Absence
of
feelings

Despair

Needs
Gradualness
and
patience

Relying on
awareness,
not
feelings

Hope,
shout and
encourage-
ment

prayers don't affect and take nothing, because he isn't waiting for anything, but what he says is just a duty he do.

God doesn't need our prayers and doesn't benefit from our prayers, we whom benefit, we ask and take from a loving and generous father, who likes to give his children, and says, "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full." (John 16:24), as if a father took his son to a pastry shop and said to him "What you wish for dear? Ask and I'll buy whatever you like!" He doesn't impose anything on him, that he wants him to choose. This prayer, my son, isn't obligatory or ritual, this is the words of a child with his father, who loves and plays with him, who complains to him, who request his needs from, live the prayer as a small child and you will not get bored and won't be forced to pray, live a happy childhood with your loving father so that he takes you concern and makes you relax and happy.

I said: How beautiful is prayer, my father, and what is the easiest if I heard this word long ago, my life had a second form, instead of the days that were lost in tiredness and deprivation, of the tenderness and love of my heavenly Father.

He said: Just begin and the Lord will make up for the years of fatigue and remember that:

The first war is: The war of the body, with its laziness and laxity and this is **solved by** gradient.

The second war is: The war of the soul, is the formality and routine **solved by** not relying on feelings but on perception.

And thirdly, the war of the spirit, Satan fights you fiercely at first by despairing of laziness from your sin and your frequent fall, so that you don't grow but give up.

First: Resist it with hope, no matter how much you fall, get up and make repentance and trust in **full** forgiveness, no matter how lazy you are, return again into your spiritual system, don't despair no matter what happens.

Secondly: Shout a lot, and ask for help from Christ. Increase Arrow Prayers, and focus on declaring your weakness before God and asking for his help and grace.

Thirdly: **You need** constant **encouragement from the Holy Spirit**, because it is the

Overcoming soul wars

Hope

Shout

Asked for
encourage-
ment
from the

greatest condolence, ask for it constantly to comfort and help you,” O Holy Spirit of God, help me, encouraged and comfort me, I'm weak and sad, don't leave me.” How wonderful the comforter, it is written “As one whom his mother comforts, So I will comfort you; And you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 66: 13). “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.” (John 14:16). Just ask and you'll find condolences and encouragement. And also, through an affectionate and encouraging spiritual father (St. John says the mouth of gold) “Beware instead of going to a doctor to treat you, you go to someone who hurts you.

I said: Is this forcing stage will be long?

He said: Don't worry about time, son, it is enough that you are on the way, in the beginning, the middle, or the end, it's enough that you are with Christ, just be honest at every stage, and beware of the war of each stage, until you are attentive and conscious.

I said: Now I want a practical training, Father, it's always practical things that stick in my mind, and I can also live by them.

He said: The first training is to practice the "Eucharist secret" every week.

I said: I don't know if it's difficult training or easy one!!

He said: The purpose of the Mass is to establish the holy sacrifice in order to unite with Christ and establish in him, we need to establish in forgiveness and strengthen against the world, its desires and currents, so the Lord said "The branch doesn't come with fruits if it isn't proven in the vine", we need to practice the Eucharist secret constantly and trust and rejoice in our steadfastness in the Lord.

Imagine someone who says take my body, my soul, my life, what love after this!

I said: But I'm not worthy.

He said: We go back to the one who doesn't deserve, and who thinks that he deserves, he is rejected, who tries to be worthy with his power. Just acknowledge our sins and our Impure, and God is the one who makes us worthy, there for the priest in the mass says "And make us worthy", Pope Kyrillos used to say "I take the Eucharist secret every day", Fr. Bishoy Kamel says "if someone no matter what his sin was, and said "I'm repentant, he will be the first one to take the Eucharist secret because he's like in intensive care.

Whenever you are sinner and Impure, you need treatment, but you deserve treatment, that's what makes you forced yourself and come to the church, but who trusts Christ's acceptance of his impure and sins, he won't be forced or hate the church.

" Even if he crawls"

But the feeling of rejection makes the person get lazy, and looks to himself with a despicable look and feels down.

I said: Sorry, Father, I always ask this question, fear of being careless?!

He said: I don't tell you to be careless, or that you have become a saint in Christ and sat in the heavens, cheered and glorified, but I tell you to say to yourself:

“I’m impure, evil and a sinner, I’m sick and I need your treatment, Lord, I need your purity to free from my impurity, I need your love to satisfy me, so I’ll be free from the love of

Whoever comes to the church does not come without discrimination like animals that cannot understand, no one visits the doctor's clinic as a kind of habit, unless the disease forces him to visit him for healing.
St. Jacob of Serugh.

lusts, cleanse, fill me, Jesus."

Pray like that before taking the Eucharist secret, and offered repentance as we agreed that repentance is "regret for the past - put in your heart not to make mistakes again - trust in full forgiveness" and then go to Eucharist to establish in this forgiveness.

I said: Thank you, Father, this realization really makes me come to the Church even if I crawl, there are times when I'm fasting and confessing, but the feeling of guilt, rejection and obsession prevents me from Eucharist. The feeling of Sin, impure and evil are a shameful and tired feeling.

I need to feel God's acceptance for me and his love while I'm in my sins, it gives me joy and strength to hate sin.

Please, Father, repeat these words for me again, about forgiveness and acceptance, I will never be bored of it, but I feel hope.

He said: We'll take a whole series together entitled "Jesus loves sinners" about how to love? how to accept love? and how to live with it? before we move on to another point, I'll tell you this example of perception.

I said: Of course, Father.

He said: Imagine that next Friday at the church, they will distribute a hot KFC meal for free, for everyone who attends before 7 AM, imagine how many people will go to the church on this day!!

I said (smiling): I'll be the first one. And sure, the church will be full.

He said: And If I said, it will be like that every week!

I said: Sure, will be great, every week is wonderful.

He said: Every week, there is no KFC in the Church, but the body and blood of the Lord, in which Christ is slaughtered, to give life, the stability against evil and lust, given to forgive sins. (i.e. for sinners and impure, not for saints), It's offered free of charge, no one can tell you in today's Eucharist queue, it's about five pounds. We lack of awareness, my son.

Without the help of divine grace, it is impossible for man to live holiness and rejoice in it.

St. Augustine

If we realize that the reason for the screams of young people from lusts and pornographic things, is to stay away from the Eucharist or the truth about the realization of the acceptance of Christ and the forgiveness of Christ, so the Eucharist is not a talisman or a blessing, but it is a union with The Holy God, so we become holy, with The Pure to become

clean, with Our Heavenly Father, so we become one with him, and we take power against the forces of evil that tire and hurt us. The truth is, my son, that

Laziness is the cover that appears on the surface, because of the youth lack of awareness about the love of Christ and the liberated power of Christ.

Because man alone won't be able to do anything, he will need divine help to use it in his strive against the desires and impurities of the world. People are willing to sacrifice when they realize the value of their sacrifice, which is getting something (KFC), the perception forcing us and make us put pressure on ourselves.

I said: Maybe it's not perception, but it's feelings, Father, because I love KFC, I wake up early, but if something other than the KFC I might not go.

He said: Well, take another example away from feelings, when you have an exam and you didn't sleep except one hour all night, and they come to wake you up in the morning, you will tell them what? I don't like exams!

I said (smiley): I get it, Father. It is perception that drives man to sacrifice and get forced.

He said: What helps you to get forced is perception, not feelings, feelings can exist or not, they are luxuries and not necessary. As for the training that we have taken " take the Eucharist secret every week", and what helps you to carry out training, is the realization of your acceptance and forgiveness and steadfastness in Christ, whatever your sins was, and this helps you to fight all week, but you can say strive in the resistance of sin, because you felt that you took a new dress from God and try to keep it.

I said: How, Father?

He said: When anyone buys new clothes and wears it for the first time, he feels so happy and try to keep it as clean as possible so it doesn't get dirty.

And if someone smudges him, he gets upset and say, "What, brother! Leave me alone, won't you be more careful?".

But when he wears any regular clothes, it's not a problem if it became dirty, it's not a problem if it's all patches, it's okay for him. When you trust that whenever you take the Eucharist, you are taking a new dress, a new life, a renewal of the covenant of love with Jesus, this makes you almost like Christ in all your words and behavior. But if you taking it

as a mere blessing or talisman, before exams or even if every day, just a form without real awareness, it either makes you slacken, don't be encouraged to the church and take the Eucharist, or make you a superficial, just a picture, without depth, strength and stability against the lusts of the world.

I said: Sorry, Father, is there any other practical training to the Eucharist every week?

He said: Read the Bible every day, and if you are not committed before, start with one verse for a week, then the second week is a paragraph, and then the third week is completed by a chapter.

I said: One verse! Why not begin with a chapter?

He said: How long you haven't been reading the Bible?

I said: About three months.

He said: Take care, Satan when he doesn't know how to stop the car, he presses gasoline.

I said: What does it mean?

He said: So, you haven't read in three months, no problem if it lasts another week!! begin step by step, with something very simple that you can do and keep up with easily, I want

you to be strives , always say "I'll die and not a day goes by without reading a verse" is that a difficult thing?

I said: No, it's easy the Verse will not take more than half a minute.

He said: If you can abide and be striving about the subject of the Verse, you will be able to be strives after that on the subject of Chapter.

I said: I get it, Father, you want to train me for seriousness.

He said: Just don't forget to abide by the three things that we mentioned before (A specific and limited time _ prayer of understanding _ live, like and pray)

I said: If I'm not tired you, Father, can you review the subject of a realization for the Bible, as you did with the Eucharist, which helps me very much to be forced into spiritual life and strive against laziness.

Although the path of the Kingdom of Heaven is narrow and distressing for man, but when he entered it, he saw an unmeasured breadth, a place that surpasses all places. Those who saw and enjoyed it testified.

Pope Athanasius the Apostle

He said: A father who had three children, who traveled to far away countries, but he followed them by sending them

letters constantly, the first son was busy with the worries of life and studying, and then working and children and the worries of life made him forget even to read his father's letters, he read them a long time ago just few times, and then the vortex of life took him and he forgot that his father sends him letters regularly. He only remembers that he has a father, but communication with him is non-existent, he lived like haven't no father, sometimes he grumbles on his father, sometimes he forgets that he has a father, sometimes he remembers memories and shed tears on his cheeks, when he remembers the happy days of childhood, when he was communicating with his father, but the struggle of life doesn't leave him the opportunity to reconnect and this beautiful life, so he enters into the endless vortex, like a shield in a machine, or you can say, a person that only eats and drinks, has no meaning of life and no taste of days.

I said: Oh, Father, is that all for those who don't read the Bible!

He said: It's not just reading the Bible, my son, it's every human who haven't a relationship with God. God is not his Father, God is not present in his life, there is no connection between them, he feels misery and tiredness in life.

I said: And does who have a relation to the Bible, and a real relationship with God won't face fatigue or misery in life?

He said: I didn't say that, but he will be a tiring and miserable in life, this is for all human beings, and the Gospel didn't say life without tiredness or distress, but there is a difference between the two of them.

I said: What is it?

He said: The difference:

Whoever has a relationship with God and trusts in his promises, God will help him and give him strength, will carry him as the Father carries his Son, will give him joy even in the midst of hardships, will turn every weakness into strength, and the shadow of death will make it a morning, he'll give him power over all his enemies, he will bring them under his feet, he will give him peace beyond every mind.

While the one who remains alone, he will struggle alone and no one will help, he will be tired and no one will comfort him, he will face the tiredness and fears of life alone and no one who is reassured or who gives peace, he remains in the tiredness and bitterness of all his days, and there in eternity will continue in the situation in which he is present.

I said: What about the other two sons, Father, to continue the story?

He said: You love stories and focus on them, my son.

I said: I love it, because it clarifies the meaning and brings it closer.

He said: Let's continue the first son, as we mentioned, he didn't notice that his father sends him letters and there are checks and instructions to face life and its troubles, so he remained tired and bitter and we saw his end. While the second son was taking letters, reading it but not believe what is in it, checks he doesn't cash, instructions he doesn't live with. Just reads the letters to satisfy his conscience, and the days that he was in need, but because he gets used to the formality and routine and not expecting to solve his problems, he was not benefiting, but he was many times complaining about his father and saying "Why leave us tired, you don't feel us", while there were times when he sent letters to his father complaining about his tiredness and pain, but unfortunately because he didn't believe in his father's promises and didn't wait for a reply, he also lived in pain and bitterness, and didn't become differentiated than his brother.

I said: Sure, this is the person who reads it without depth, understanding and applying.

He said: If the Bible doesn't turn into a letter from our heavenly father, a personal book, personal instructions, my father recommend me, my father promises me, my father rewards me, nothing will be gained, and our lives will remain routine, formal, tiring, painful and bitter.

God's promises are not only for saints and fathers, but for every human being he has created, we are all his children.

He cares about us all the same as you like Abraham, David and Paul.

I said: We were not raised like that, Father, we were raised and inside us "There is a big difference between us and the saints?", and the promises are for the saints and the fathers, but we are sinners.

"My father interrupted me" and said: Yes, sinners. We are all sinners, "they have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable", Abraham has lied, David had killed and adultery, and Peter denied, everyone has his weaknesses, who accepted the adulterers and thieves accept

us, the father doesn't differentiate between his children, but cares more about the weak and shows him more love, Christ came to sinners, promises to all his children, and his absolute promises to those who accept and believe in them.

I said: First, they sinned and repented once and for all, while I made a lot of sins.

He said "With smile": And you too, repent a lot, for a righteous man may fall seven times a day, and who among us is a righteous man! we are all sinners, just reject the sin and walk in the way of Christ, and whenever the person is wrong, he needs many promises for forgiveness his sins, many promises of protecting him from Satan, and of God's help to him in his hardships, so rejoice because you have many promises and great love.

I said: Forgive me, Father, I want to say something, but I hope you don't get mad at me.

He said (with much love): Come on, son. Speak freely, without hesitation, to benefit from our talks together, whatever you want to say, speak to me freely.

I said: Sometimes I get ideas that you, Father, are making it much easier. So, is there nothing to prevent me from Christ's love! and depriving me of the

But where sin
abounded, grace
abounded much
more.

(Romans 5: 20)

many and absolute promises that you say?

He said: One thing.

I said: What is it, Father?

He said: When you refuse to repent and do sin by your will, the Holy Spirit says to you, "Repent", and you say "I will not repent", then "Return", you say "I'm not coming back."

I said: Is there anyone who does sin of his own will, Father? I think everyone is doing it without will??

He said: There is, my son, Judas is the one who went to the high priests and said, "What do you give me to deliver him to you?" He was the one who asked for a proper opportunity to hand him over, he's the one who, after Christ warned him, went on and cared nothing.

I said: I dare and say, "There might be times when I do this, Father?"

He said: Don't oppress yourself, son, these are thoughts from Satan to plunge you into despair, after all we said about Judas, if he had returned to Christ, he'd accept and forgive him, but he refused and despaired and didn't return to Jesus.

If you don't return, don't repent, and despair at the acceptance and forgiveness of Christ, your destiny will become like the fate of Judah.

I said: Whatever my sins are, can I come back?!

He said: Whatever your sins are. Satan keeps making nets and nets to bring you down, but with one word all his nets burn and escape all his traps.

I said: What is it, Father?

He said (simply): It's the word I have "sinned" it's just a word, but I have "sinned" from your heart, makes the Lord accepts you and forgiving all your sins.

"By the word (sinned), sins are erased" says St. Anithamus of Jerusalem. The prodigal son inherited his father while he was alive, then he lost all his money, lived with pigs, lived in a filth, that he wasted his money on whores. And when his back, his father didn't blame him for anything, he just back and this is repentance. he just threw himself in the arms of his father, and didn't tell him " what did you do? Give me obedience and tears, and then come to hug you", but while his son still away, he saw him, opened his arms and embraced him. and said "my son", he said it when his heart is inflamed with love, he said it and

embraced him, he said it and prevented him from continuing his words, didn't give him the opportunity to say "Make me as one of your slaves", In addition to all that he rewarded and didn't punish him. Accepting the son is somehow we can imagine it, but to tell him, take a ring, shoes, a robe, a the fattened calf and joy!! this is above the perception of human beings, above the mind and the realization of man, even so the eldest son feels angry and didn't want to enter.

I said: A very strange thing, Father, a son who takes the inheritance and waste it, then we say he is back, okay, but all these rewards are a strange thing, something that really upsets.

He said: This is in our favor, not against us.

With one word, all sins
are erased.

**Fr. Anthemus of
Jerusalem**

I said: How, Father?

He said: Who of us has not strayed, we are all sheep that have strayed, we are all lost. And this gives us all hope to return and trust in God's promises, and his tenacity in reading the Bible and trusting in promises, no matter how we are, so the realization of these things that makes us strive and tire.

I said: Great words, Father and encouraging, to not just forced, but to be strives , to make life's happy, joyful and a joyful strive even to death, because we have a father who encourages us, like someone who plays a football match and is striving to play because his father encourages him, especially if he wins, will give it to his father on his birthday.

He said: All right, son, our struggle in spiritual life, is a gift we give to Jesus, our heavenly father, who waits for us with joy and looks at us with longings, so that we can cross and pass the alienation of this world, to meet him and lay in his arms. So, let us trust in his promises, hold and believe in them.

I said: I often heard about the forcing stage, when I hear sermons about prayer, but now after this realization, it is very different, when the person understands why he is forced, he will strive not forced, but when words are just commandments without grace and without realizing the gift, it becomes a burden and the spiritual life becomes boring and tiring. What else, Father, about the third son in our story?

He said: The third son was texting his father regularly, reading his letters and understands it well, spends checks and enjoys them, and also some things were difficult to

understand in his father's letters, he was sending his father to inquire, so he was answering and explain to him, also, some things he tells him "you will understand it later", and he was convinced and patient and said, "Father said later so it's later". His enemies used to tire him and complain about him a lot in the courts, but when he back to his father, he sends him a solution, and gives him solutions and guides him on how to respond to prove everything he says, then he used all that to dissipate all his enemies and invalidates all their bad advice, so when he finds grief finds Solace, and when he is in pain he finds help, when he feels needed, he finds satiety, he didn't need anything, but his father gave him everything richly, but gave him the possibility to flood others with the many blessings he gives him, not only all of this, but there he felt With his bosom, and his presence as if he were with him, although at first he didn't feel that, but he believed his father when he told him that one day I would give you this grace that exceeds the mind and really waited and won. Yes, he waited for years, but in the end his life is not counted with people, but with angels, he doesn't live as if in the earth, but as if in heaven, a joy that doesn't utter with, and glorious all the time, even in the midst of hardships. while he's in pain, feels joy! How so? You don't know, he's in pain and joy at the same time, so you see him

and you get confused and say, "You're in pain?" He says yes. And you tell him you're happy? He says yes, too. He melancholy, but attributable. Weak but strong. Contradictory things in their form, but they're real. When you see him, you feel his inner peace, not only for himself, but also give it to others, not only by his words, but by dealing with him or approaching him. he took the form, strength and influence of his father. The Bible really said, "Didn't I say you were gods", and said, "Here is the kingdom of God within you."

I said "While Tears coming out of my eyes": Enough, Father, all this while I'm in pain, tiredness and misery. Satan distracted me with myself and the trivial things of the world, that I didn't turn to the Gospel, the love of Christ, his acceptance and his precious promises, and if I read it and walked into the spiritual life, the goal is myself. I pray, I fast, I'm free from sin. I totally left God and my relationship with him, and his view to pray, to fast, to repent, how he looks at me in my struggles with sin, his love for my words whatever they are, and his caring for my things even trivial, even with the hair of my head, my food, my drink, my future, I lived but I didn't live. I have been his son just by name, by name only, and the truth is a slave to myself, or a slave to the world by eating, drinking, dressing, studying and working, and if I can

say the truth, Father, a slave to Satan, who wasn't a son of Christ is a slave to Satan, I wasn't a human being but an animal, no need now for courtesy, so it is not a life, Father, away from Christ, it's an animal life, a demonic life, a real hell on earth.

Now I know the meaning of forcing that in order to move from this tiring life, it needs time and training, so that I can reach for joy, comfort and printing inside me the image of Christ that he created me on, so that I can live joy and comfort.

And I start tasting eternity instead of the abyss I'm in, I'll start. I'll start from now on. I will force the body with joy and wisdom, I will ask for the help of Christ, when I'm forced myself, I will look at him and he accepts me, and when I fall I won't lose my hope even if I fall even a million times a day in sin, I will not give up. I'll die looking at him better than living in sin. I will read in the bible every day a small part of it, I will not jump and also I will not stop, I will take the Eucharist, no matter what I do, I will not allow the devil or a human or sin to prevent me from my father and the body of my heavenly father for the rest of my life, who wants to prevent me, he wants me to die, I will not allow that anymore. Enough death, enough life without meaning, enough misery and

fatigue in nothing, but in things that lead me in the direction of an abyss that has no headquarters. I will tire and strive in the way of life until I learn, I will be patient and confident that I will get, but Jesus' look at me and his satisfaction with me and his promises to me that he accepts me and rejoices in me and I'm at this stage my everything, I want no more, to look at me and tell me "I love you." What's harder and tired than what we have learned, that God will not accept us unless we have feelings, unless we spend the night and day reciting psalms and prayers to be like saints, he will not rejoice with our strive as long as we fall and rise.

And will not count us repentance because the true repentance is not to fall into sin, concepts that tired us and broke our backs, and made us hate the spiritual life, but you can say, Father, we hated God and think of him as cruel and don't feel us, and the force stage is to humiliate us, not to teach us. To satisfy his greatness, not to grow us, O, Father.

He said: Start now, my son, a little bit and beware of spiritual leaps, because the devil is very malicious, as we mentioned that when he doesn't know how to stop the car, he tramples gasoline until it turns over or enters into a wall or a tree. Beware of spiritual leaps, don't read many

chapters or fast long fasting, but start with an easy system, continue and grow a little bit, step by step.

I said: What is it, Father?

He said: Pray in the morning and evening, take The Eucharist every week, the Gospel every day, the Arrow prayer as much as you can, good morning and adjust the corners and short prayers such as "spiritual bullying – the Asposide - restaurant prayer." and focus to have these prayers with understanding , that your words with God are not a recitation of the mere law and order, and the gospel shall be for your life, and God's promises to you personally, his commandments to you in particular, repentance for apology and confidence in forgiveness, and not just words that are ineffective. And so, everything is understandable and has meaning and life. Even if without feelings, because you speak to a true God who hears and feels you "your Father".

I said: Exactly, Father, I will begin with the grace of Christ.

He said: May Lord help you, next time we will continue the stages of prayer and we will talk about the second stage, which is **Habit**.

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