

Visit your local parish as often as possible. Confess more often and receive the Holy Mysteries. Doing so you will abide in God, and this is the highest blessing. During Confession, repent and confess frankly and with contrition all your sins; for the unrepented sin leads to death.

Devote Sundays to works of charity and mercy; for example, visit someone who is sick, console someone who is in sorrow, save one who is lost. If anyone will help the lost one turn towards God he will receive a great reward in this life and in the age to come. Encourage your friends to read Christian spiritual literature and to participate in discussing spiritual matters (not Church politics or gossip).

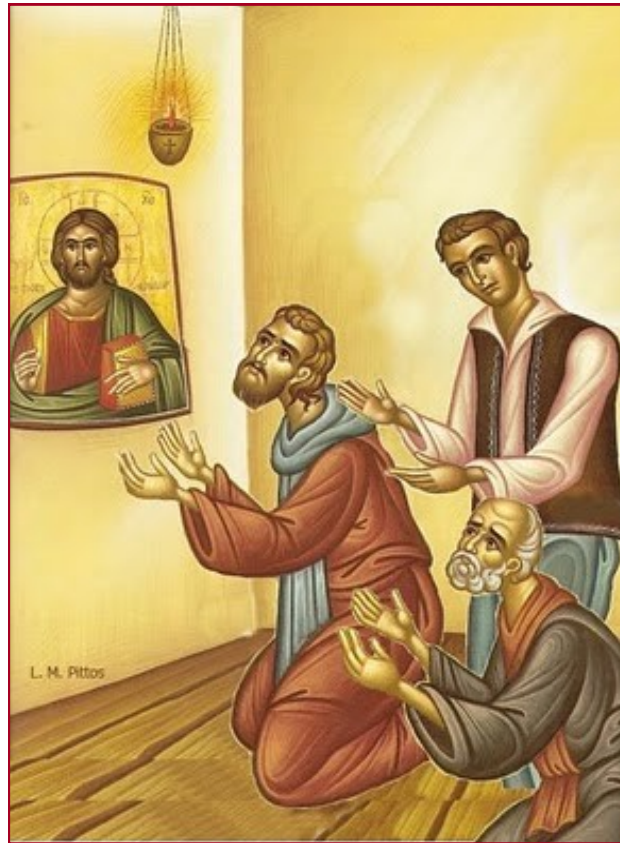
Let the Lord Jesus Christ be your teacher in everything. Constantly address Him by turning your mind to Him; ask yourself: what would He do in similar circumstances?

Before you go to sleep, pray frankly and with all your heart, look searchingly at your sins during the past day. You should always compel yourself to repent with a contrite heart, with suffering and tears, so you do not repeat past sins. As you go to bed, make the Sign of the Cross, kiss the cross, and entrust yourself to the Lord God, who is your Good Shepherd. Consider that perhaps this night you will have to appear before Him.

Remember the Lord's love towards you and love Him with all your heart, your soul and your mind.

Acting in this way, you will reach the blessed life in the Kingdom of Eternal Light.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.



**Holy Ascension
Orthodox Christian Mission**

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**Helps for a
Spiritual Life**



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Force yourself to get up early and on a set schedule. As soon as you wake up, turn your mind to God: make the Sign of the Cross, and thank Him for the night that has passed and for all His mercies towards you. Ask Him to guide all your thoughts, feelings and desires, so that everything you say or do will be pleasing to Him.

After washing yourself, get down to morning prayers. Pray with concentration and with reverence. Ask Him to give you faith, hope, love and charity, as well as calm strength to accept all that the coming day may bring to you - its hardships and troubles. Ask Him to bless your labors. Ask for help to accomplish some particular task that you face; to steer clear of some particular sin.



If you can, read something from the Bible, especially from the New Testament and the Psalms. Read with intent to receive some spiritual enlightenment, inclining your heart to compunction.

Try to devote at least fifteen minutes to spiritually contemplate the teachings of the Faith and the profit to your soul in what you have read.

Start every morning as if you had just decided to become a Christian and to live according to God's commandments.

As you enter upon your duties, strive to do everything towards the glory of God. Start nothing without prayer, because whatever we do without prayer later turns out to be futile or harmful. The words of the Lord are true: "Without me, you can do nothing."

If your labors are successful, give thanks to the Lord; If not accept all hardships as a penance for your sins, in the spirit of obedience and humility.

Before every meal, pray that God will bless the food and drink; and after the meal give thanks to Him and ask Him not to deprive you of spiritual blessings. In everything, avoid excess. Following the example of Christians of old, fast on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Do not be greedy. Be content having food and clothing, imitating Christ Who became impoverished for our sake.

Strive to please the Lord in everything, so that you will not be reproached by your own conscience. Remember God always sees you, and so be carefully vigilant concerning the feelings, thoughts and desires of your heart.

Never argue or make excuses. Be gentle, quiet and humble; endure everything, according to the example of Jesus. He will not burden you with a cross that exceeds your strength. He will also help you carry the Cross that you have.

Having done a good deed, do not expect gratitude, but temptation: for love towards God is tested by obstacles. Do not hope to acquire any virtues without suffering sorrows. In the midst of temptations do not despair, but address God with short prayers: "Lord, help... Teach me to... Do not leave... Protect me..." The Lord allows temptations and trials; He also gives the strength to overcome them.

Ask God to take away from you everything that feeds your pride, even if it will be bitter. Avoid being harsh, gloomy, nagging, mistrustful, suspicious or hypocritical, and avoid rivalry. Be sincere and simple in your attitude. Humbly accept the admonitions of others, even if you are more wise and experienced.

When you feel slack, or a certain coolness, do not leave off the usual order of prayer and pious practices which you have established. Everything that you do in the name of the Lord Jesus, even the small and imperfect things, becomes an act of piety.

If you desire to find peace, commit yourself completely to God. You will find no peace until you calm down in God, loving Him alone.

From time to time seclude yourself, following the example of Jesus, for prayer and contemplation of God. Contemplate the infinite love of our Lord Jesus Christ, His sufferings and death, His Resurrection, His Second Coming and the Last Judgment.