

The Spiritual Life of an Evangelist

By Victor Beshir

Without a deep spiritual life, an evangelist will never succeed in evangelism. The evangelistic process in its entirety and its individual steps are mainly the work of the Holy Spirit. Unless an evangelist is living in the spirit (Acts 20:22), walking with Christ in his/her heart (Ephesians 3:17), engulfed by the grace (Acts 4:33), and directed by His hands, there would be no evangelism even if the evangelist is active in ministry.

As evangelists' we need to remember that people have been captured by the power of the devil for many years and he will not set them free to think, to see, or to accept easily. He has captured and deceived human beings using thousands of years of experience; he also has his entire army working diligently day and night without ceasing; he is the ruler of this world (John 14:30). People are in the lions cage and there is no way out except by the power of God. Only God can prepare the minds, hearts, and the souls of individuals to accept the word of God. Without God, individuals will never see their chains or their eternal judgment.

How then can an evangelist win souls to Christ? The only way is to humbly follow God's directions. Who will identify the souls that are in need and are ready to receive the Gospel? Let Him also take care of the spiritual war accompanied by the opening of the lion's cage to set individuals free. How can an evangelist reach those individuals? He could reach them only through a heart full of fervent love for God and the salvation of others, and a life hidden in Christ, "For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). These two could only be reached through a deep spiritual life.

Does this mean I should quit evangelism until I reach this level of spirituality? Of course not! On the contrary, you should be encouraged to learn about the secrets of evangelistic work, the unseen spiritual war, then commit yourself to His love, surrender your life to Him, and engulf yourself in the river of spirituality for your own fulfillment first and for salvation of others second.

The Principles of Spiritual life: Understanding the importance of having a deep spiritual life would require shedding light on its principles and its practicality. Hundreds of volumes have been written by the Fathers of the Church and others on spiritual life. During this lesson, I cannot even get into a summary of the spiritual life because it would take a whole book to do so, but I'm going to highlight a few important points, asking you to make spiritual reading a target and a source of daily watering in your spiritual life.

- 1- **Continuous feeling of a need** for the Savior. This is a continuous thirst and hunger for Him, the lover of my soul.
- 2- **Continuous Repentance:** In most cases, an individual's spiritual life starts with repentance with a conviction to follow God for the rest of your life. Yet, repentance should follow us every day since we sin every day, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (1 John 1:8-10). However, this does not mean we live carelessly or without being watchful, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:6, 7). In summary, we strive to live a righteous life and when we sin we repent, believing that His blood cleanses us from all sin, and His grace will restore us to the fullness of communion with Him.
- 3- **Clear Objective:** Without a clear objective of the spiritual life, it could be replaced by routines of prayers, worship, services, and even evangelism. **My objective is, "Find Jesus, touch Him, and love Him"** in every prayer-either simultaneous or Agpyea- every reading in the Bible or a spiritual book, every time I go to church, and in every service in the church or outside the church.
- 4- **Gradual Commitment:** Start spiritual practice in small steps until a habit is formed, then increase it slowly until the increase becomes a habit too, and so on. Based on psychology, to form a habit, it takes months. So, how do I begin? Start by committing

yourself to a small prayer along with a small reading in the Bible every day. Then strive to comply regardless of your schedule or your physical status. In fact, you need to force yourself to do it until it becomes a second nature.

Once it becomes a habit, add to this prayer another prayer and another reading from the Bible and spiritual books. Strive for a few months to make them your new habit. After that, continue to add. Eventually, the Holy Spirit will lead your prayers and contemplations in a way that is so fulfilling, allowing you to taste the sweetness and love of God.

Never allow yourself to neglect your daily spiritual commitment. As long as you keep your daily prayers and spiritual reading, you're protected. Neglecting them means the beginning of losing the spiritual protective power and starting to fall. In addition, life would be void of God's peace and joy. Unrest would follow the person until he/she repents and gets back to his/her daily spiritual commitment.

5- Spiritual Guidance: We all need a father of confession to confess our sins to. You might have a spiritual guide in addition to the father of confession. Moreover, surround yourself with spiritual friendships. This could be extended later on to friendship with the departed saints. It is a good idea to conclude your private prayers with talking to the saints.

6- Psalms and Praises: Psalms are a great source of spirituality. Please do not recite them as a habit or because you have to finish them, but rather train yourself to pray psalms slowly. Try to live every word you utter. Let the words come out from your heart, expressing your true feelings and needs. It helps to understand the spiritual meaning of the psalms, so read psalm interpretations. St. Augustine, among others, is one church father who wrote interpretations. Then mix psalms with simple tunes. Music gives you an awareness and depth. While praying Agypa, mix prayers with prostration. For example, though it's not required, prostrate at the end of a few psalms. When you recite: "Glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," bow down in awe, giving glory from your heart. Praises are powerful spiritual channels as long as you understand the meaning of the praises and they are accompanied by heartfelt prayers.

7- **Approach:** Always approach prayers with joy. It's time to meet your beloved God whom you missed dearly and you come eager to spend quality time with Him in order to be filled with His grace, peace and joy. Please remember that God is so generous. Every time you stand before Him, you will not leave Him empty handed, but He will give you spiritual grace, that may go unnoticed by you, but it is precious and important for your salvation.

8- **The Secret of Secrets:** Do you seek God's mercy? Then be merciful, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy" (Matt 5:7). Whenever you're distressed by a spiritual war, give more to the poor.

Would you like to have a victorious life? Don't judge others. When we judge others, the grace of God will withdraw its power in order to show us our weakness. Then we will suffer a setback in our life. Jesus teaches us, "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (Matthew 7:1, 2). Instead of judging others, learn to love others and have mercy on others. Follow the example of our Lord Who never judged any of the sinners He met. Instead, He loved them, showing great respect and consideration.

9- **Church Prayers:** Church is where we temporarily travel to heaven and live the best of our time and return feeling that we have been deeply touched and enlightened. How do we experience this heavenly journey? I invite you to read my booklet, "[The Orthodox Divine Liturgy, An Invitation To A Heavenly Journey,](#)" it is available on the evangelism web page:

<http://evangelismcopticorthodox.org/booksbookletsbrochures.html>

Briefly, prepare yourself spiritually the night before attending the Divine Liturgy. In the church, do not allow anything to take you away from having a continuous heartfelt prayer. Let your heart talk more than your tongue. As much as you can, move away from distractions. Some people get busy with singing, being involved in rituals, or arrangements without having a true prayer from the heart. As a result, they do not meet the Lord in the Church. Meeting the Lord in the church and spending quality time with Him

is the major reason for going to the church. Let your objective be clear when attending other prayers and praises in the church.

The Church has a rich liturgical year, full of feasts, fasts, seasons, and readings. Following the liturgical year will enrich your spiritual life greatly.

10- Prayer Meetings & Retreat: Evangelists need to gather and pray. Listen to what happened when the disciples prayed together, "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31). We need to have, if possible, a weekly prayer meeting.

From time to time, we need to have a retreat to kindle our love in God and to move from a cold or lukewarm spiritual life to one that is fervent and filled with the fire of the Holy Spirit. Going to a monastery is an excellent choice as long as there is a deep spiritual agenda, allowing time for personal meditation and reflections. If no monastery is nearby, then search for a retreat house in your area to find a means of having personal time with God. If this is not available, then try to spend a day with God in a quiet area where you devote time to God alone.

Reality of Spiritual life:

Will the adversary let you enjoy your spiritual life without hindrance? Of course not.

Will he wage a spiritual war against you to stop your spiritual commitment? Yes, he will. He will try to find the weakest point in your spiritual life and attack you with it. He will try to hit hard.

Will the joy of spiritual life continue always? It will with some interruptions, but it will be sustained by the grace of God.

What to Do to Keep My Spiritual Life?

1- **Continue on your daily commitment** regardless of your weak spiritual life, or your physical status, or even when you're injured by sin. He is the only way and salvation even when we are spiritually injured.

2- **Launch out into the deep** (Luke 5:4) : Don't be satisfied with standing in the shallow end of your spiritual life. Always strive to go deeper and be with God to get His blessings.

3- **Give God generously:** Give God your heart, your love, your life, your time, and everything without reservation. In return, He will shower you with abundant spirituality

4- **Bed Time:** Before going to bed, have some quality time with your Bible, psalms, and deep prayers. This is the time when you recharge your spiritual battery. The Fathers said that the blessing during the day depends on the time you spent with God at night. Since your soul needs preparations to get into a deep prayer, allowing yourself quite time before prayers where you turn off all electronic devices. Enjoy singing a touching spiritual song or hymn. Whenever possible read a spiritual book and mix reading with meditation.

5- **Cut Corners:** Don't waste your time and energy with useless engagements, such as spending hours on surfing the net, chatting, or texting, or similar time consuming activities. Instead, keep it to the minimum and use the main chunk of your time for your spiritual life. Your salvation is more important than all those activities.

6- **Flee from sin and any path or friendship that could lead to it:** Never think that you're stronger than sin or temptation. Never allow yourself to remain in a situation that could lead to sin. Close your eyes and ears to any sight, speech, or songs that could adversely affect you.

7- **Spiritual Friendship:** This is the kind of friendships that you will need around you. This friendship comes from those who share the same values and goals as you. That is, to seek God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

8- **If you fall,** rise immediately, and talk to your father of confession. Get back to God with all of your heart. He will heal and restore you.

9- Consider your **personal salvation** as the most important continuous task in your life. It's more important than life itself.

Questions:

- 1-** Please add biblical verses and or sayings of the Fathers to the above lesson.
- 2-** Based on your experience, what could you add to the above?
- 3-** Examine your spiritual life on the above and find out what you are missing. Make a list and start to apply one item at a time. Share your needs with your Father of Confession (You don't send this to me).