

Introduction to Orthodoxy Series: Fall 2016

Handout for Part 3: Introducing an Orthodox Worldview

For Orthodox Christian: 12 Things to do as part of your Rule of Life **(Formation in Christ)**

+How can I know God as God really is?

+How can I know Christ as the way, the truth and the life of God and humanity, the light of the world?

+How can I know the Orthodox Church as ‘the household of God’ and ‘the pillar and bulwark of the truth’ – God’s kingdom on earth?

If you want to find answers for yourself to these questions... Orthodox Christian saints and spiritual teachers would ask you to do the following things as faithfully and honestly as you can, and to see for yours what happens.

1. Be ready to do whatever it takes to **know**. Humbly and courageously do what you are told without questioning it. Lay aside your will. Vow to follow what you come to know, whatever the cost.
2. **Pray for enlightenment**, even if yours is ‘to whom it may concern.’ Pray something like this: ‘God, reveal yourself to me as you really are.’ As you pray, do not look for anything. Let whatever happens, happen.
3. While praying this way, **read through the New Testament very slowly** at least three times. Take several months to do this. Do not be bothered about what you do not understand, but try to put into practice what you do understand.
4. During this time, **go to Orthodox services as often as possible**. Just stand or sit there and listen. Do not judge other people in any way. Do not be bothered about what you do not understand.
5. During this time do not lie about anything, do not consciously harm anyone, try to be kind and good to everyone you meet, without exception. If possible do some good work for others, even if just for an hour or two a week, as secretly as possible. Also if possible, give away some money secretly to those in need (almsgiving). **(Be kind.)**
6. 6. During this time if you are not married, do not engage in any sexual acts at all, of any kind, even with yourself alone. If you fail in this, put it behind you immediately with a prayer of repentance and start over. **(Be pure.)**
7. During this time do not get drunk. Do not eat too much. Do not eat unhealthy foods. And try to eat and drink less than normal a couple of days a week, e.g. keeping the fast on Wednesdays and Fridays. **(Be sober.)**

8. 8. During this time, sit in total silence at least 10 to 15 minutes a day, or even up to 30 minutes a day if you can, watching the thoughts that come to your mind and letting them go with a prayer: 'God enlighten my mind. God help me with this. God help these people who come to mind.' (**Be quiet & reach out to God.**)
9. During this time try to speak as little as possible without irritating others. Do not try to make your opinions known or accepted in conversations, unless asked. Listen to others. Be attentive to their presence and their needs. Do not argue with anyone about anything. (**Listen & be attentive.**)
10. During this time find someone that you fully trust and share with that person your thoughts, feelings, dreams, hang-ups, compulsions, etc. in detail. Do not however, go into detail about sexual things, or about other people. Discuss in detail your family of origin and your childhood experiences, good and bad. Focus on what memories distress and sadden you, and what memories bring you joy. (**Be accountable.**)
11. During this time do a 'check list' of possible food, alcohol, drug and sex addictions, and other addictions that you may think that you have, like, e.g. rage, gambling or shopping. If you see that you are addicted in some way, seek help and possibly enter a treatment program.
12. During this time do your work or your studies to the best of your ability; carefully, responsibly, conscientiously and devotedly. Live a day, even part of the day, at a time. Focus fully on what you are doing at the given moment.