

Thou hast enjoined Thy commandments, that we should keep them most diligently *Psalm 118:04*

1. Blessed are the blameless in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. 2. Blessed are they that search out His testimonies; with their whole heart shall they seek after Him. 3. For they that work iniquity have not walked in His ways. **4. Thou hast enjoined Thy commandments, that we should keep them most diligently.** 5. Would that my ways were directed to keep Thy statutes. 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I look on all Thy commandments. 7. I will confess Thee with uprightness of heart, when I have learned the judgments of Thy righteousness. 8. I will keep thy statutes; do not utterly forsake me.

First octave Vs 1-8 - All vs begin with "Aleph" - leader, or science
Principles of a God-pleasing life.

1-3 degrees of attainment of perfection
4-5 productive powers of such a life
6-8 conditions necessary for such a life.

Thy commandments

Are the way of life.

Each has a purpose, sometimes only understood by God.

Not arbitrary! Not external!

Internal, because they reflect WHO GOD IS

Keep them most diligently

A lifestyle CHOICE.

Continual, enduring

Diligence

same as zeal - "**Moving power in a man**" (St Theophan the Reclus)

2 core constituents:

1. Value, priorities, what is important, real desires.

Must not decrease.

Like "spiritual inertia" to get through the bad times.

Pro 29:18 Where *there is* no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy *is* he.

Some people have very little of this - Worldly, distracted, love pleasure, etc.

NO WAY there can be diligence until we have the right priorities.

You need to "want".

If you do not think you "want", pray to "want to want".

This is learned, by experience and grace IF WE ARE LISTENING

DILIGENCE IS A CHOICE

Do not wait for it! No entitlements here!

ZEAL IS NOT A FEELING! IT IS A CONSTANT CHOICE!

Feelings schmeelings!

2. The "Other" Part - day to day life.

Waxes and wanes

Must be restored daily. - Our daily task!

Psalm 118 good for this, also Gospels, promises of Scripture, Jesus prayer.

Keep to things you can keep to as a baseline: fasting, prayer, attending church, confession, communion

This part of diligence comes from Grace (the presence of God in our life, always active) and is attracted by our effort.

MAKE A GOOD START: To your day ; To the upcoming fast

"To lag in the fight at the very outset of the struggle and thereby to furnish a token of our coming slaughter is a very hateful and dangerous thing. a firm beginning will certainly be useful for us when we later grow slack. A soul that is strong at first, but then relaxes, is spurred on by the memory of its former zeal. An in this way new wings are often obtained" (St John Climacus ,Ladder of Divine Ascent, Step 1, #11)

Why do we lose this zeal?

ALWAYS - SIN.

"When the soul betrays itself and loses the blessed and longed-for fervor, let it carefully investigate the reason for losing it. And let it arm itself with all its longing and zeal against whatever has caused this. For the former fervor can return only through the same door through which it was lost."

(Ibid, #12)

The commandments are not optional

ANYTHING which is against the commandments decreases Zeal

THEREFORE

Anything which increases zeal is NOT OPTIONAL

Keeping zeal - making things not common.

Crossing, bowing when coming in church.

Doing things carefully - not legalistically.

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