

Calmness

“If you want to know who the man of God is, you can recognize him from his silence”

[*St Isaac the Syrian*]

Calmness or quietness is a great virtue and we, being brides for Christ, must be decorated with it...The calmness of the soul, the calmness of the thoughts, the calmness of the senses, and the calmness of the tongue.

In this article, I will make an attempt to mention only some of the verses, stories and sayings of the Fathers with which we may be encouraged and learn the importance of calmness, and how to acquire it.

- + *“A sound heart is life to the body, but envy is rottenness to the bones”* (Prov. 14:30)
- + *“A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.”* (Prov. 15:4)
- + *“Soothing puts an end to great sins.”* (Ecclesiastes 10:4)
- + *“In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.”* (Isaiah 30:15)
- + *“that you also aspire to lead a quiet life”* (1 Thess. 4:11).

* From the sayings of Saint Isaac the Syrian:

- As the clouds obscure the sunlight, talking too much disturbs the soul.
- If you love repentance, you ought to love silence, for without it no repentance will be perfect.

* From the sayings of the Spiritual Elder, St John Saba:

- A person with a pure heart, speaks about his Creator every hour, and whoever listens to him, rejoices and becomes inspired by him.
- Whoever talks too much and raises his voice, lacks judgment.
- Whoever is cautious with his tongue, will never be robbed of his treasure.

* It is said that three old men used to visit Abba Anthony every year. Two of them always asked about the purity of thoughts and their own salvation, while the third always kept silent. After several visits, the blessed Abba Anthony said to him: “All this time, you have been visiting me, and never asked me about anything!” So he replied to him: “It’s enough for me to behold your face, O my father!”□

- + One of the fathers once said: Calmness and quietness have great benefits. If you filled a jar with harmful insects and closed its opening, wouldn’t they all die? But if you leave it open, the insects will come out and harm whoever they encounter. Likewise, he who lives in calmness and quietness, all evil thoughts in his heart will die.
- + Abba Poemen was once asked: Which is better: talking or silence? He said: “silence for the sake of God is good, and speaking for the sake of God is good as well.

And he also said: “Whoever mingles with people in excess, cannot escape gossip.

+ Once the Pope Theophilus, the 23rd, set out to go to the Valley of Natron to visit the monks and learn from them. At that time, the Abbot of the monks was St. Paphnutius, the disciple of St. Macarius the Great. He embraced silence very much, so the Monks gathered and said to him: “Tell the Pope one word so he may benefit”, he replied: “If he doesn’t benefit from my silence, he will not benefit from my words” So the Patriarch heard this and benefited very much.□

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