

MINDFULNESS OF GOD

*Without being mindful of God,
nothing good can be achieved,
nothing bad can be avoided.*

Nothing else motivates us to do good works so much as having God in mind continuously. On the other hand, we cannot avoid evil unless we have God in mind. We see this historically, in the many writings of the Church.

The first-created man, Adam, in forgetfulness of God, disobeyed the divine commandment and ate of the forbidden fruit.

In forgetfulness of God, Cain, the first son of Adam, killed his brother.

Joseph the Good, son of the patriarch Jacob, was forearmed with mindfulness of God when the Devil set snares for his downfall and spiritual death by means of the Egyptian woman. When she approached him with her wiles he said, ***“And how am I to commit this wicked deed, and sin before God?”*** (Genesis, 39: 9), thus rendering the devil’s machinations futile.

The prophet David was a man after the Lord’s heart. For Scripture says: ***“He raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I found in David, the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who will do all my will’”*** (Acts, 13:22). As long as David was mindful of God, he too was steadfast. ***“I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved”*** (Psalms, 16:8). When the devil removed from his mind the memory of God, his fall unavoidably occurred. He fell into adultery and murder (2 Samuel, 11:1-27). Only when the prophet Nathan publicly checked him (2 Samuel, 12:1-14) did David remember God again and return to the secure path of humility.

The same thing happened with David’s son Solomon, the author of the proverbs of wisdom. When he was mindful of God, he asked for Wisdom rather than gold, as Scripture tells us: ***“Give me the wisdom that sits by your throne, and do not reject me from among your children”*** (Wisdom, 4:9), and again, ***“Wisdom has been my love. I courted her when I was young and wanted to make her my bride. I fell in love with her beauty”*** (Wisdom, 8:2). As he asked for it, thus he received it from the Holy Spirit, according to the passage: ***“And I gave my heart to knowing wisdom and knowledge. And my heart knew much, wisdom and knowledge, I came to know parables and science”*** (Eccl. 1: 16-17). Nevertheless, the great lover of Wisdom, he who was filled with wisdom, in forgetfulness of God became a lover of women: ***“Now King Solomon loved many foreign women...from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the sons of Israel, ‘You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods’; Solomon clung to these in love...his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was no longer wholly true to the Lord his God...”*** (1 Kings, 11:1-4).

Saint Maria the Egyptian (527-565 A.D.) took the opposite course. As long as she did not keep God in mind, she worshipped sin, she was inflamed by whoredom, she was the devil’s tool. When she was

mindful of God, she became pious, she reposed in freedom from her passions, she became a vessel for the Holy Spirit. Generally, whoever fell into sin and rose from it, achieved this by being mindful of God and remembering eternal hell.

Should we examine extensively the birth of sin, we find that every downfall of man presupposes a forgetfulness of God. With a continuous mindfulness of God, *“neither will we have any time to give to sin, nor will we leave any place in our hearts for the enemy...having God a tenant in ourselves”* (Saint Basil, *Hexameron C*, P.G. 29, 77C); in other words, whoever remembers God has Him as a tenant in his heart, and does not have time for sins, nor any place for the devil. However, someone falls from a continuous mindfulness of God, *“when becoming forgetful of God’s benefactions and being found heedless towards the Benefactor”* (Saint Basil, *Terms in Compendium*, P.G., 31, 1289B).

Abbas (Desert Father) Evagrius said: *“At all times remember eternal judgment, do not forget your exit, and there will not be a misdemeanour in your soul”* (*Gerontikon*); in other words, always remember the final judgment, do not forget your death, and no sin will be found in your soul.

It is more preferable for someone to remember God than to breathe or to do anything else but this: *“Being mindful of God is better than breathing, and if one may say so, do nothing else but this alone”* (Saint Gregory Theologian, *Sermon 27*, *Theological A*, P.G. 36, 16B).

M. P. (in translation)