

— IS PRAYER ALONE ENOUGH? —

How am I to become pure? How am I to become meek? How am I to become poor in spirit? How am I to become temperate? How am I to become a contemplative? How am I to become holy?

Here is where strength of character must come into evidence. We all would like to be pure, meek, poor in spirit, temperate, contemplative, and holy. Then why are we not? We pray for the various virtues, but, somehow, we see no change in our lives and those around us continue to suffer and put up with our misbehavior. It is very true, we must pray for virtue, but prayer of itself is not enough. For our prayer to be effective, we must give some “CONCRETE” sign of a proper predisposition. If we really want God’s help in the matter of acquiring any virtue, then we must show God we are ready and willing TO GO TO WORK in the performance of solid and genuine virtue.

PRAYER, even the most earnest of prayer, for the virtue of Purity, remains fruitless so long as we continue to frequent forbidden places and look at forbidden pictures, etc. The search for sanctity remains absurd so long as we continue to slosh around and about the swampy wastes of the television, internet, and etc. If we know such swampy wastes are infested with poisonous snakes, then it makes no sense for us to go wading in the dirty water. We know very well where the filth is – so why is it we so often “accidentally” find it? And after we “accidentally” find it, why do we delay in leaving such a filthy place?

PRAYER, even the most earnest of prayer, for the virtue of Meekness, remains fruitless so long as we refuse to put any restraint on our lightning-quick flashes of irrational temper and our white-hot explosions when we meet with even the very slightest contradiction or opposition. Do we resent constructive and instructive criticism and reject even the most well meant suggestions concerning our opinions, lifestyle, or personality? Does constructive or instructive criticism offend or insult us and throw us into the depths of depression?

PRAYER even the most earnest of prayer, for the virtue of Contemplation, remains quite fruitless so long as we keep feeding the imagination with trashy novels, rubbish magazines, compulsive reading of newspapers, gossiping, and all the rest. When we go browsing in bookstores and libraries, do we resist the magnetic pull toward the seamier books and magazines? And when we read, do we read to learn more about Truth, or do we read mostly to satisfy our insatiable curiosity and craving for mere facts and information?

PRAYER, even the most earnest of prayer, for the virtue of Poverty, remains fruitless so long as we continue to frequent fashionable and expensive shops. What does our wardrobe look like? How conscious and