

Acedia and Relational Prayer

Five signs of Acedia to watch out for:

1. **An Interior restlessness** – a need to move about, to have a change of scenery, listlessness (lack of interest, energy, or spirit).
 - a. Temptation to flee place
 - b. Temptation to flee time (present) by nostalgia of past or fantasize about future
2. **Exaggerated concern for one's health**
 - a. Temptation to place higher value on physical over spiritual good
3. **Aversion to manual or tedious work**
 - a. Temptation to flee ahead to next task
 - b. Seek distractions and compensations
4. **Neglect in observing the rule**, carrying out one's duties (prayer being primary).
 - a. Temptation of minimalism
 - b. Temptation to maximalism
 - c. Temptation to quit
5. **General Discouragement** without any obvious cause
 - a. Loss of meaning, temptation to despair (interior void)
 - b. Sense of weakness, fatigue, restlessness, nothing satisfies, everything seems like a lot of effort

Five remedies for Acedia:

"Is this what I'm supposed to do?" *** "Is this what I'm supposed to be doing **right now?**"

1. **Tears** – tears in the presence of the Lord, for Love of God, and in Need of His Help
 - a. Acknowledge our need for a savior and that one cannot go it alone.
 - b. Grieve about the things that matter: your own actions and character, the suffering and weakness of your neighbors. Grieving about these things help you retain your sense of purpose.
2. **Prayer and Work**; work is closely bound up with prayer
 - a. Endure. When you work, do your tasks with diligence (invest), patience, and joy
 - b. Alternate work with prayer
 - c. "O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me."
 - d. The Jesus prayer "Lord, Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."
3. **Counter with Scripture**; the battle against wicked thoughts is waged with the Word of God
 - a. Confront temptation with Scripture as Christ did with Satan in the desert
4. **Meditate on Death or rather the end of your life**. Death is not simply the end of our human life; it is the encounter with the Lord
 - a. Suffering of the present does not compare with the glory that awaits us (Rom 8:18)
 - b. Ultimate End helps us counteract self-centeredness or self-love – root of all sins.
 - c. Thoughts of death gives meaning to the passing of time: direction and significance.
 - d. Recall the Incarnation, our means to union with God
 - e. Meditate on the hour of Christ's death, what He did for us and why
5. **PERSEVERE!!**
 - a. Stay faithful to your daily routines/tasks. Increase fidelity. (DOS, Rule 6) like a handrail keeps you on track in a dark stairway.
 - b. Do not abandon your post! Long-suffering, patience, "abiding beneath the yoke"

"Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit" Ps 51:12

The Noonday Devil: Acedia, the Unnamed Evil of Our Times, Jean-Charles Nault, OSB

Talking Back: Antirrhethikos, Evagrius of Pontus

Searching for and Maintaining Peace, Jacques Philippe

Acedia & me: A Marriage, Monks, and a Writer's Life, Kathleen Norris