

Theory 6

HOLINESS, HAPPINESS, AND A PLAN OF LIFE

(The first part is a review of Theory 1.)

The Goal of Life is Holiness

Holiness is transforming union with Jesus.

We are invited to become an adopted son or daughter of God the Father in Jesus Christ. “The soul becomes God from God through participation in him and his attributes...” John of the Cross, *Living Flame* 3:8)

Holiness and Happiness are the same thing!

Everyone wants to be happy.

This desire [for happiness] is of divine origin:
God has placed it in the human heart to draw man to the One who alone can fulfill it.”

CCC 1718

Happiness is to possess the good things we need to fulfill our human nature. What do you want to be happy? God created all people with a common human nature that needs certain good things to be happy:

1. Union with God through union with Jesus
Receive the life of Jesus by the frequent reception of the Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Daily Mental Prayer
2. Physical and Emotional health (that comes from sleep, nutrition and hydration, exercise, hygiene, shelter, clothing)
3. Relationships with Family and Friends
4. Meaningful work in which we do some good for others and for the world
5. Knowledge and truth
6. Beauty

Money, time and power are not goods, just means to goods. We need all the goods, but we must keep them in order.

Love the lesser things less; love the greater things more,
for virtue is rightly ordered love.

We need a way to organize our lives to reach happiness and holiness.

- We call this a plan, a rule or a recipe of life.
- St. Pachomius (+348); Basil (+379) and Benedict (+547) suggest to us a Rule, Strategy, Structure ---→ Recipe
- A Rule of Life is a schedule, a strategy, a recipe – whatever you want to call it to live a well-ordered and balanced life and be at peace.

A Rule of Life is like baking – not cooking. We need:
The Right Ingredients
The Right Order
The Right Proportion

A Recipe of Life

1. Physical and Emotional Needs
 - a. Sleep 6-8 hrs/day
 - b. Personal hygiene 30 min to an hour each day
 - c. Eat 2 hrs/day
 - d. Exercise 30 min 3-5 days/week plus the commute to gym if necessary
 - i. 11 hours
2. Friendship with Christ
 - a. 30 min/day in Meditation/Rosary
 - b. Frequent the Eucharist and Reconciliation
 - i. 1-2 hours
3. Time for Friendship with your spouse, kids, friends
 - a. 1-2 hours
4. Meaningful Work
 - a. *In* the home or outside of it
 - b. 1 hour for your commute
 - i. 9 hours
5. Knowledge - About God and the good world he created
6. Experience beauty in its many forms

That's about 24 hours.

C.S. Lewis said:

Put first things first and we get the second things thrown in;
put second things first and we lose both first and second things.

Be creative in combining two or more of these at one time: walking and talking with a spouse or friend at sunset gets your friendship, exercise and beauty!

We don't want to pursue happiness in a self-centered way.

We prevent selfishness by prioritizing our loves:

- Love of God
- Love of neighbor
- Love of self

Mother Teresa summarized pursuing happiness with JOY: Jesus, Others, and You.

Loving God

The most important thing we need to be happy is to love God. The greatest way to show another person we love them is to spend time with them. Teresa of Avila defines prayer as "taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us."

Prayer is to spend time in friendship with God every day, talking to Him from the heart, listening to Him in silence, and just being with Him.

If you were to have coffee with a friend, how much time would you set aside? At least an hour! And if you really liked that friend, you could talk to them for hours. So, if we're really serious about friendship with God, we'll give Him at least thirty minutes a day of our undivided attention. The rosary podcast is a good place to start but let God draw you into more time with Him. Jesus revealed a great way to love him is to receive him often in the Eucharist. And He said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

Loving others

We love others by doing good for them in our families, in our work, with our friends, in our Apostolate and with the spiritually and materially poor.

Love (doing good for others) is applied first to the family. To love them well, we must know them well. Otherwise, we will not know what good to do for them. Therefore, the first thing we must do is spend time, one-on-one, getting to know and understand each person in our family. But we will have to devote time daily to this.

We can do good for others through our work. The purpose of work is not to make more cash or gain more power or give you access to what you want. The purpose of work is to make the world a better place.

Every person has a superpower – some way to go good for others.

You may get paid for it or you may not. But the value of work is not based on pay – its value is doing good for others. That is why we should do some kind of work, whether in the home or outside of it, until we die.

We can do good for others in our Apostolate to the spiritually and materially poor. We can do good for our friends by sharing life with them but if you don't take the initiative, then you won't have friendship.

Loving ourselves

If love is to do some good for someone, then what goods do we need?

We need goods of the body: sleep, good nutrition and hydration, exercise, hygiene, shelter and clothing.

We need goods of the soul.

The intellect needs to be nourished by reality in the form of truth. We need a daily diet of truth by the discipline of study, learning and knowledge of the:

Truth about God

Truth about ourselves

Truth about the good world he created.

Avoid the counterfeit of being “well informed” by the news or social media or analysts and bloggers. You can’t get to reality or truth this way. Even if you could it would be about what is happening now and not eternal truth. It would be about the passing truths about other people or events. We need the truth about God and ourselves. Learn and meditate on the truth about God and a greater knowledge about yourself.

The passions, or feelings, need to be nourished by reality in the form of beauty. Beauty is order and surprise. We need a daily diet of beauty through nature, music, literature, religious art or depictions of nature. It’s hard to find art that is not a glorification of moral disorder. Get rid of Entertainment that does not nourish your soul with truth or beauty.

The intellect and feelings need to be nourished by Reality in the form of truth and beauty. Reality means the good order and plan God created and that he is bringing about by His Providence even in the midst of our own ugliness sin and tragedy and brokenness. Entertainment is an escape from reality we find overwhelming, painful or boring. Entertainment is often seeking pleasure in the disorder of sex or violence or the sensational. Entertainment is a disengagement with reality rather than a deeper engagement with reality. That is why beauty makes you more excited to be alive when it’s over and entertainment less excited.

Reality is more boring after entertainment and more exciting after beauty. If we want to feed our souls with reality and be happy, then we have got to put our screens away because they are often an occasion of evil. They are better looking but counterfeits that disconnect us from reality.

The moral life is about avoiding the near occasion of sin and doing good. Jesus said: if your right hand causes you to sin – cut it off. Cut out Entertainment: TV shows, Tik Tok, Instagram, YouTube, news, sports and news analysts and commentators and social media, and video games, candy crush...on and on.

We don’t expect a beginner to change everything in their life at one time.

We can’t work on everything at once. We want to show them the big picture, give them a vision for living a simple way of life that leads to true happiness. We want them to begin to create a strategy, a plan, a recipe for happiness.