

Worship in the Desert: The Spirituality of the Desert Fathers and Mothers

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A Guide to Devotional Reading

- The perspective and attitude of devotional reading
- The pace and space of devotional reading
- Personal obstacles
- Perceptual obstacles
- “How might I be attempting to avoid God? How might this attempt be reflected in my approach to these texts?”
- Specific problems to keep in mind:
 1. The time-bound cultural and theological perspective of the writer
 2. Aesthetic resistance to a text
 3. Negative listening
 4. Spiritual despondency and discouragement



The Call to the Desert

- The conversion of Constantine – the sudden legitimacy of Christianity – the danger of nominal Christianity
- Key question – what does a genuine Christian look like? The call to love.
- The desert as the home of the evil one and his demons
- Distractions -- the importance of silence.
- The issue of the passions and their blinding effect.



The Call to the Desert

- Luke 5:15-16 – Note the rhythm of Jesus' life and ministry.
- The desert as a sacred place, specifically designed to facilitate listening to God, self-awareness rather than self-deception, and love for God and neighbor.
- Fallen human beings hide from the truth. The desert becomes a learning space for revealing the truth to Christ's disciple about God and about themselves.

