

John Cassian – “Conference 10”

1. Theophilus’s letter: the sad situation of Serapion.
2. Key principle: “What we wish to be while praying, we ought to be before we begin to pray. The praying mind cannot help being fashioned by its earlier condition, cannot help its earlier thoughts lifting it upward to heaven or pulling it downward to earth” (245)
3. Germanus needs help on learning “how to achieve” a state of unceasing prayer (235).
4. The relationship between purity, solitude, and prayer (236-237).
5. Training in “recollection” (238-240).
6. The key verse – Psalm 70:1. (240).



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7. Note the common monastic struggles on pp. 240-242. What would these look like in a modern setting?
- Gluttony: the desire for food
 - Not eating what should be eaten (an exaggerated asceticism).
 - Struggles in reading the Bible (headaches, falling asleep)
 - Insomnia
 - Sexual temptations
 - Temptations to anger, avarice, melancholy
 - Temptations to accidie, vanity, pride
 - Self-satisfaction: look how much I’ve grown!
 - Wandering thoughts
 - Spiritual dryness
 - Demonic attack
8. On meditating on the Psalms – (243-245).



What other spiritual disciplines formed the rhyme and rhythm of their lives?

- Fasting
- Manual labor
- Communal worship

