

Sample Questions - Characteristics of the Spiritual Path - HH Pope Shenouda III

(updated 7/17/2015)

1. In his introduction to Characteristics of the Spiritual Path, H.H. Pope Shenouda III explains that the purpose of this book is to explain to you the spiritual path, its signs and features, and how you can walk in it. What does he say is the beginning of the spiritual path according to the Holy Bible? What scripture is referenced in support of this?

The fear of God is the beginning of our spiritual life, which is in Proverbs 9:10.

2. In the introduction, H.H. Pope Shenouda III outlines the major themes of the book to his readers. What are the four general elements upon which the uprightness of the spiritual endeavor depends in the relationship with God?

How serious, committed, meticulous and faithful

3. H.H. Pope Shenouda III discusses the reasons for the success of many people in attaining their goals. He explains that the love of the goal and the desire to attain it gave them these four character traits. Which four character traits are given?

enthusiasm, strength, diligence, and spirit

4. When discussing false aims, H.H. Pope Shenouda III mentions that “the ego is in competition with God.” What is meant by that? Explain

the ego causes people to be self centered that we put ourselves as competition to God. this lowers our spiritual growth because we care more about ourselves than God.

5. It is discussed that even spiritual matters are to be means and not goals. Give an example of a spiritual matter and explain why it ought to be a mean and not a goal. Provide one biblical reference to support your answer.

spiritual matters- prayer, fasting, knowledge contemplation and reading. the aim is god. these practices are just a way to abide in him. “These people... honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” Matthew 15:8

6. In speaking of “the constancy of the spiritual goal,” H.H. Pope Shenouda III describes who the steadfast person is by explaining who the spiritual person is. How is the spiritual person like the arrow of a compass?

he is like the arrow of the compass, always pointing in the same direction whichever way it is moved

7. In defining the steadfast person, H.H. Pope Shenouda III describes the “true man” and the “weak person”. Compare and contrast these two.

the true man is steadfast, stable, determined, not hesitant, and does not change in different circumstances.

8. In discussing “Examples of Those Who Fell” with regard to “The Constancy of the Spiritual Goal,” H.H. Pope Shenouda III talks about the story of Samson. He notes that the Spirit of the Lord was moving him, but then something happened. What happened to Samson? Which Biblical reference talks about this?

Samson began his life as a Nazarite to God and the Spirit of the Lord was moving in him (judges 13;25) then what happened? desires entered the heart of Samson besides God, so the Lord departed from him Judges 16;20

9. The Apostle Saint Paul speaks of being steadfast in 1 Corinthians 15:58. What does he say and what does it mean?

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” (1 cor. 15:58) They don’t live a life of conflict between good and evil or between God and the world.

10. In discussing “Examples of Steadfastness,” H.H. Pope Shenouda III talks about the “Repentants.” Who is one of the examples of “Repentants” listed? What is the act of repentance?

Saint Augustine, saint Moses the black, saint mary of Egypt, and sain Pelagia. Repentance is the cutting of every relation with sin forever and decisively with the heartfelt love for God.

11. In chapter two, H.H. Pope Shenouda III instructs that the spiritual aspirant must start and continue his relationship with God. The reasons for commencing differ from one person to another, but he outlines three situations which may cause a person to commence his relationship with God. List the three situations and describe one of them.

One person may be affected by a sermon, book, good example or by a spiritual person. A person can be starting a relationship with God on special occasions.

12. What is meant when it is said that a spiritual aspirant may think of commencing a serious relationship with God on a certain occasion? Give an example.

At the beginning of a New Year, Birthday, or on an personal occasions, he may sit alone with himself and decide to begin a new spiritual way and a more serious and active relationship with God.

13. H.H. Pope Shenouda III notes that “it is good to have a good start but what is important is to continue.” He gives Saint Peter the Apostle as an example of someone who has a good start, but stumbles. Explain this example. Provide a Biblical reference to support your answer

At one time, St. Peter the Apostle was full of zeal for the Lord, and said to him, “ Even if all are made to stumble because of you, i will never be made to stumble,” (matt. 26;33) however, he fell away when he denied the Lord saying, “I do not know the man” (Matt26:74)

14. The person who vows or makes covenants is an example of someone who has a good start in their spiritual path, but often finds it difficult to continue. What does the person who vows do when making the vow, and what does he do soon after? What does H.H. Pope Shenouda III say would have been better to do instead of vowing or promising?

Most people make vows that are beyond their capabilities and cannot continue. It would have been better for them to raise these promises and vows to GOD as prayers and longing desires.

15. In continuing your spiritual path, H.H. Pope Shenouda III says you should experience warfare. What does it mean to experience warfare and why is it important?

It is not sufficient to take just one step along the spiritual path, because one step does not take you to the goal. This is on one hand. On the other hand, it does not give you any experience in the devil's combats, trials, and wiles.

16. God does not allow the devil to wage war against you at the beginning of your path. Why is this and when can a person expect the warfare to become tougher?

The more a person walks in the spiritual path, the tougher the warfare becomes due to the envy of the devils. In this case, God makes his grace abound towards the believer to support him in his struggle and shield him from the devils attack.

17. In continuing the spiritual path, a person that has no root is described. Describe this person and what it means to "have no root."

A person approaches the spiritual life as a result of a shock or after being affected temporarily by an incident or sermon. He says to the Lord, "If you deliver me, I will follow you all my life" god delivers him, so he follows him for a little while but having no root he withers away.

18. In continuing the spiritual path, it is said that "the root is the life of profound faith and true love." What does this mean?

It is the personal relationship with God, communion with him, knowing him, and not just outward semblances which do not spring from the heart.

19. In speaking of "The Inner Correction," H.H. Pope Shenouda III talks about the need to amend your heart from within, and to rectify the actual causes from which sin springs. In correcting yourself, why is it important to do more than amend the outward appearances? What does Revelation 2:5 say about this?

in correcting yourselves, do not merely amend the outward appearances, but amend the heart from within. Rectify the actual causes from which sin begins. The repentance and spiritual practices can continue because they have a firm root in your heart. "remember therefore, from where you have fallen ; repent" (REv, 2:5)

20. H.H. Pope Shenouda III discusses that at the beginning of the spiritual path, self coercion may be necessary in order to suppress your will and force your soul to walk in the spiritual path. He goes on to say that force may be necessary because there is no love. What does he say will happen if you eventually reach this love? What will you be able to do?

Pope Shenouda said that once you reach this love you love god with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might like it says in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Matthew 22:37. This love would reign over all your feelings to the extent that you no longer love anything in the world, confident that "Friendship with the world is enmity with God." (James 4:4) and that, "If

anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (1 John 2:15). This divine love makes you pray continually with all of your feelings, in deep love with contemplation. You will not fear because your perfect love for God casts out fear. It says in 1 John 4:18 that “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear.”

21. H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that you should “be confident that the fear of God is the path that leads you to love.” Why does the fear of God prompt you to keep His commandments?

22. H.H. Pope Shenouda III quotes the holy Scriptures in talking about the starting point of the spiritual path. According to the words of the Divine Inspiration, which are mentioned twice in the holy Scriptures, what is the starting point of the spiritual path? What does Proverbs 9:10 say about it?

The starting point of the spiritual path is the fear of God. It is mentioned once in Psalms 111:10 and again in Proverbs 9:10. It says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

23. H.H. Pope Shenouda III instructs that the fear of God is a curb restraining us from committing sin. He also notes that many jump into the love of God without passing through His fear. What don't the people who jump into the love of God without passing through His fear understand? What are they led to because they are not used to the fear of God?

The people who jump into the love of God without passing through His fear don't understand that God is just and He is fair and will punish them for their sins. All they think is that God is merciful, long suffering, and loving, and that He does not deal with them according to their sins or punish them according to their iniquities like it says in Psalms 103:10. These people do not understand the right meaning of love because they are not used to the fear of God, they are led to indifference, recklessness, and unheeding of the commandments, and consequently they fa;;.

24. A person starts their spiritual path with the fear of God's punishment, and it may continue with him all the days of his life. In discussing this, H.H. Pope Shenouda III quotes one of the Fathers who fears three things. What are those three things?

The three things that the father said he fears are the moment his soul leaves his body, the moment he stands before the Judgement Seat of our just God, and the moment when the sentence is announced.

25. In discussing the “Benefits of the Fear of God,” H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that “it is better for a person to fear here than to fear on the Day of Judgment.” What does having fear here accomplish versus having fear on the Day of Judgment? H.H. Pope Shenouda III also quotes a section of the Thanksgiving Prayer referencing His fear which helps us not to deviate from the path. What does this section of the Thanksgiving Prayer say?

Pope Shenouda said that it is better to fear ere than to fear on Judgement Day because fear here induces him to repent and to reconcile with God if he wills, but fear on Judgement Day avails nothing. Fear here gives us a will to return. It is like a fence for us along the path so that we do not deviate. It says in the Thanksgiving Prayer, "Grant us to complete this holy day and all the days of our life in all peace and in your fear."

26. There are some who refuse to acknowledge God's power and choose not to walk in the fear of God. Which four causes of fearlessness are presented by H.H. Pope Shenouda III?

The person who does not fear is the person who has not yet examined his self and has not known his real self and his true past, his sins and weakness, and does not know the spiritual level required of him and the necessary efforts and struggle he should make.

27. There are some practices that help us acquire the fear of God. List and explain two of them. Practices that help us acquire the fear of God:

-Know that all your thoughts will be disclosed before all creation in the Last Day ,except those of which you repented and were blotted out.

-The hidden sins in which you fear to commit before people but commit in the dark, try to be ashamed before God who sees them.

-Let God have an awesomeness which induces you to be ashamed to commit any sin before him.

-Feel shy before the angels of God who surround you, see you and hear you. Know that your dreadful sin sever you from the communion of angels who will abandon you, leaving you to your malevolent adversaries who attack you.

-Walk in the fear of God so that you may reach his love .

-Know that the fear of God is in the New Testament as well as the Old Testament, and that the love of God is in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.

28. Self-coercion is discussed as a means to help a person walk in the spiritual path. Explain self-coercion and how it helps a person who has awoken from his slumber to change his path. What does Saint Isaac say about forcing yourself to pray?

Self-coercion means that a person forces himself to walk in the spiritual path. It is true that the spiritual life in its proper sense, is that a person loves God, loves goodness and loves the Kingdom of Heaven, and walks in the life of the righteousness and purity willingly from his heart, feeling that his communion with God is his complete felicity and the longing desire of his heart. But, not all people start at that level.

-A person wakes up from slumber, and the fear of God begins to enter into his heart. He fears the condemnation for his sins, fears the wrath of God, and fears that death might overtake him whilst he is not ready for it. The fear calls him to change his path.

-Saint Isaac says "Force yourself on the night of prayer ,enhancing it with Psalms". In this way the person forces himself to pray, to stand, to kneel or make prostrations.

29. In speaking of practicing virtues which are forced, H.H. Pope Shenouda III assures us that these virtues are not void of love, because without love you cannot practice it. Similarly, self-coercion is presented as a transitional virtue. Discuss why it should not remain a permanent virtue and give an example of the transition.

Self-coercion should not remain a permanent virtue but should be a mere conducive to a better one. An example of self-coercion which gradually leads to love is almsgiving. The Holy Bible says that, "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). Will you refrain from giving until you reach the standards of a cheerful giver, or the standard of "he who give with liberality" (Romans 12:8)? You should not always have to force yourself to give. After a while you should become a cheerful giver and you will not need to use self-coercion anymore. Therefore, self-coercion should not remain permanent.

30. Self-coercion is greatly beneficial to a person just beginning his spiritual path. Explain why this is and give an example.

31. In chapter four regarding "The Spiritual Conduct," Romans 8:6 is cited, saying, "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Why is it that carnal people cannot inherit the kingdom of God? What does 1 John 2:16 say about this?

32. In answering the question, "Is the Body a Sin," H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that it is not, otherwise God would not have created it. Why does H.H. Pope Shenouda III say that the body is holy? What does 1 Corinthians 6:20 tell us we should do?

33. H.H. Pope Shenouda III talks about conflict between the body and the spirit in chapter four. How does a person become one being, not two conflicting ones?

34. Along with spiritual conduct comes uprightness. What is an upright person and how does he act? What does Proverbs 4:27 say about this?

35. In speaking of uprightness, H.H. Pope Shenouda III warns against extremity. More specifically, he speaks about how those operating in extremes can constrain others. What does this mean? What did the Lord Jesus Christ do to the scribes and pharisees because of their extremity?

36. Within the section speaking of "Uprightness Versus Falsehood," H.H. Pope Shenouda III makes mention that uprightness needs a humble heart. Why is this? Why does the haughty person continue in his wrong behavior? Why does the Holy Bible describe the haughty person as a fool?

37. As H.H. Pope Shenouda III presented “Uprightness Versus Hypocrisy,” he said that “through hypocrisy they combine two types of perversion.” What are the two types of perversion? Why is it said that these type of people fall into dual sin? Describe the example of Judas given as a double hypocrisy.

38. Honesty is the virtue discussed in the “Uprightness Versus Deception” section. What characteristics are used to describe an upright person in this section? How are they explained?

39. How is artfulness described with regard to uprightiness? How does the upright person reject these ways?

40. Why is the upright person trusted by whoever communicates or converses with him?

41. In speaking about “Values and Spiritual Evaluation,” how does H.H. Pope Shenouda III define values? What are the things of value in your opinion which direct you in life?

42. H.H. Pope Shenouda III defines success for us in the section titled “The Meaning of Success.” What are the three examples of true success given by the Pope?

43. In “Caring for Eternity,” H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that the spiritual aspirant “considers his present life as mere preparation conducive to eternity.” What is meant by that?

The spiritual aspirant’s prime concern is his eternity. He grows in this feeling until eternity occupies the whole of his concern, and his thoughts become focused on his eternal destiny. Eternity becomes of prime value in his life. Every deed or aim that conflicts with his eternal life is absolutely and unquestionably rejected. Therefore he considers his present life as mere preparation conducive to eternity. His concern for eternity gives his present life a pure spiritual direction, keeping him steadfast in God and circumspect in His love and in keeping his commandments.

44. In the section on “The Spirit and the Body,” what the majority of people care for is discussed. Why is it that people’s spirits weaken?

The majority of people give the whole or most of their concern to their body. They care for its nourishment and health, strength and beauty, providing it with its need of food, medicine and treatment, rest, activity, and relaxation. In like manner they care for the bodies of their children and relatives. Yet their spirits do not take the same attention because the evaluation of the spirit’s needs is never given a thought, or may be neglected. That is why people’s spirits weaken, having received neither adequate spiritual nourishment, nor care for the necessary

spiritual fortifiers, practices, and spiritual vitalizers such as reading and contemplation, psalmody and spiritual gatherings, prayer and ascetic practices.

45. In chapter five, there are three examples of spiritual values discussed: Prayer, Yourself and Others, and Comfort and Toil. Explain the value of Prayer.

If you realize the true value of prayer, it will become for you as the saints said, an integral part of you, indispensable like your breath. Our failing sometimes is that we appraise human effort more than prayer! That is why we prefer to depend on our striving, our intelligence, and our experience more than on prayer. For such reasons we place prayer most of the time the last of our concerns. We pray if we find the time to pray, or if we remember to pray, or when we are reminded to do so by others. This is because we do not give prayer the value that benefits it. The same applies to all the other spiritual practices. Thus your whole life with God needs re-evaluation so that you may feel the importance of God to you and the importance of your life with Him. Then you will recognize your life in the light of an ideal evaluation, so undoubtedly does your relationship with others.

46. In chapter five, there are three examples of spiritual values discussed: Prayer, Yourself and Others, and Comfort and Toil. Explain the value of Yourself and Others.

The esteem of the precious human soul, and the circumspection to observe the prerogatives and feelings of everyone is one of the values kept by the spiritual person. If the value of man rises in your sight you will find yourself naturally respecting and loving everyone, not daring to hurt anyone's feelings, nor daring to err against or with any person causing them to stumble. You fear that God may request their blood from you in the Last Day God is the God of all and He cares for the master as he cares for the slave. He cares for the elderly as well as the young, the sage as well as the uneducated. He shines His sun on the evildoers and the virtuous, and sends His rain on the righteous and the wicked. No one is forgotten by God. Every soul is dear to Him. He looks after the soul as the Good Shepherd who gives his life for his sheep as it says in John chapter 10. You should act in such a way because God left you a model. If you have this value in your sight you will respect the freedom of others and you will respect others and you will respect their rights. You will not provoke anyone, nor plunder, nor treat anyone unjustly, nor hurt, nor pillory anyone, but you will embrace all with your love. The value of the human soul calls you to serve and to expend yourself for the sake of saving others. He who believes in the value of every soul, says with St. Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:29, "Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?" and remembers how the Lord went to look for the soul which did not go unnoticed among the flock and did not lose its importance in the presence of the ninety-nine in Luke 15:4-7. He toils for the sake of one soul.

47. In chapter five, there are three examples of spiritual values discussed: Prayer, Yourself and Others, and Comfort and Toil. Explain the value of Comfort and Toil.

The ordinary person is concerned with his own comfort even if it causes other people to suffer. But the person with values finds his true comfort when he toils for the sake of making others comfortable. To him comfort means to give comfort to others, not to himself. In his concept comfort is the comfort of his conscience and not to the comfort of his body. He is fully aware that the true comfort is the eternal comfort and not the comfort on this earth and that everyone in eternity will receive his reward according to his labour like it says in 1 Corinthians 3:18. That is why the toil for the sake of goodness is one of the values which the spiritual man cares for, and is one of the characteristics of the spiritual path.

48. H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that “commitment is one of the most important characteristics of the spiritual path.” Why does he say that a person who does not adhere to his commitments is by no means spiritual? Describe the example given of Abraham the Patriarch with regard to the virtue of commitment and the life of obedience.

H.H. said this because the spiritual person commits himself to every word he says and to every promise he makes, to every agreement with others, and to every rule and covenant between him and God. He also abides by and follows particular principles and values, morals and spiritual rules. He lives responsibly. That is why he is respected by all. Any word he says has its weight and its importance to those he deals with. It is better written than a written and authenticated agreement. Even if he does not speak but merely nods his head as a sign of approval, it is acknowledged that he is committed and will adhere to his agreement without the need for any witnesses or signatures. He is committed to what he decrees and to what he imposes on himself. He is also committed to the spiritual principles and to what is imposed on him by the general discipline and principles. He also feels that he is committed in his relationship with God, to obey Him and keep his commandments. The Holy Bible gives us a wonderful example of the virtue of commitment Abraham the Patriarch held fast to to the life of obedience. He carried it out despite all the hardships it entailed. He obeyed God when he was called to leave his relatives and his land and to walk after Him not knowing where he is going like it says in Hebrews 11:8. His commitment reached its sublimity when he offered his only son - for whose sake he had received all the promises - as a burnt offering.

49. What does H.H. Pope Shenouda III say that a lack of commitment involves? What does the absence of commitment mean about a person? Describe the example that was given about the children of Israel in speaking of a “lack of commitment.”

Pope Shenouda said that lack of commitment involves a type of indifference and license of behaviour, and detachment from every bond, condition, and agreement in a disrespectful manner. The absence of commitment means that a person is devoid of the sense of responsibility and seriousness and is proof of weakness. H.H. gave an example of this. He said that the children of Israel failed in their commitment to the farthest extent. When Moses presented them with the ten commandments of God, they all cried out to him saying, “... Tell us all that the Lord our God tells you and we will hear and do it.” (Deuteronomy 5:27). But sadly they did not hear or do anything Moses told them and then they went on and built a golden calf and worshipped it in Exodus chapter 32.

50. In chapter five, while speaking about “Lack of Commitment,” H.H. Pope Shenouda III mentions that “grace does not conflict with commitment.” What is meant by this? Describe the example given in this section regarding tithes.

He who through grace has risen above the level of the law’s requirements is not required to submit the law but he who is below that is. An example of this is paying the tithes. You are not bound by the law of the tithes if you pay more, conforming to the principles! “Give to him who asks you and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.” and “Sell your possessions and give to the poor.” This is the level of grace. If you have not attained to it you are committed to the law of tithes.

51. What did saint Abba Anthony the Great say was the greatest of all virtues? What does it mean?

St. Anthony said that, “Discernment is undoubtedly the greatest.” Discernment means that a person discriminates between right and wrong and distinguishes between good and evil.

52. H.H. Pope Shenouda III identifies three sources of wisdom. List each one and describe how the first source of wisdom is gained. What does James 1:5-6 say about this?

The first source of wisdom is the wisdom of God. The second source of wisdom is seeking counsel from people on whose mouths God talks. The third source of wisdom is the wise and the experienced. The first source of wisdom, which is the wisdom of God, is gained through prayer, according to the Apostle’s words, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting.” (James 1:5-6). Thus we continually pray to God to guide us, we pray to Him to enlighten our minds and our hearts, to inspire us with wisdom and teach us how to walk in His path. As long as wisdom is from above, let us then seek it from above.

53. “The Most Important Domain Where Wisdom Is Necessary” is discussed in the chapter on Wisdom and Discernment. H.H. Pope Shenouda III points out that deeds are divided into four categories, but says that the first two need no discrimination. What are the four categories of deeds? Explain the third and the fourth categories.

The first category of deeds are those which are obviously good. The second category of deeds are those which are explicitly evil. The third category needs reasoning whether the deed is right or wrong. The person is unsure of its means and outcomes. In this matter he needs wisdom and discernment or at least some good advice and a word of benefit to enlighten the way before him. Here appears the need for spiritual fathers, counsellors, and the sage. The fourth category which also needs wisdom and discernment is the preference between two ways where the conscience does not know which of the two is better. The two ways may be good but which is better and which is more suitable for the person is not clear. An example of this is when a person does not know whether to choose the monastic life or the ministry of priesthood. Both of them are good, but which is better or more suitable for the person? Such matters need

wisdom, discernment, and time until the person examines himself and hears the voice of God in his heart or through the mouth of a wise father or a sincere counsellor. The matter needs wisdom within us or within counsellors.

54. In the section on “Intelligence and Wisdom” of chapter six, H.H. Pope Shenouda III compares and contrasts the two of these qualities. Choose one of the points that he makes and discuss it.

Pope Shenouda said that wisdom has a mouth much wider than intelligence. Intelligence may be a mere part of wisdom. A person may enjoy an extraordinary intelligence and an excellent intellect, yet he does not behave wisely. There may be obstacles which hinder his thinking and intelligence in his practical life. He may be obsessed by a certain lust which governs his behaviour so he completely succumbs to it and behaves without wisdom despite his intelligence which may have been impeded by the lust which took over the reins. In his behaviour he may submit to nervous outbreaks and behave with his nerves instead of his intelligence but fall short in experience and knowledge. Thus his inadequacy leads him to unwise behaviour.

55. In speaking of “Intelligence and Wisdom,” H.H. Pope Shenouda III points out that “every wise person is intelligent, but not every intelligent person is wise.” What does this mean?

If the wise person lacks intelligence he compensates for it by obtaining counsel, reading, and benefitting from his own and other’s experiences. A person may be intelligent and think rightly but lack precision in expressing himself due to his lack of knowledge of the proper meaning of words, But the wise person says what he means and means what he says.

56. In chapter six, H.H. Pope Shenouda III identifies some Hindrances to Wisdom. Describe why hastiness in conduct is one of the hindrances to wisdom. How long did Saint Makarios the Great fight the thought of going into the wilderness to see the hermit fathers in order to determine whether or not it was a thought from God?

Hastiness does not allow for thinking, scrutinizing, and knowing other opinions, nor does it give a chance to seek counsel or the guidance of God through prayer. It entails a type of superficiality. Hasty behaviour is often frivolous and chaotic. God may send to the hasty person someone to advise him saying, “Be on your guard. Take heed to yourself. Give yourself a chance to think. Revise the matter with yourself”. Regarding this, we mention how some of our children in the diaspora come to Egypt desiring to get married within a couple of weeks. Contrary to this was St. Makarios the Great. When he had a thought of going into the inner wilderness to see the hermit fathers, we find him saying “I kept fighting this thought for three years to see whether it was from God or not.” So St. Makarios the idea for three whole years in order to determine whether or not it was from God. The conduct of the wise is prudent and discreet, taking its due time of thinking, profound study and scrutiny, even if they are accused of being slow. We do not deny that some matters need speediness, but there is a difference between speediness and rashness. Rashness is the hastiness which is void of study and

scrutiny. It is perilous if connected with essential matters or destinies. That is why the right solution is not the fast solution but the perfect solution. Hastiness may be a quality of youth because they are enthusiastic and want matters to be done promptly. However, if they study the matter with their elders they may be convinced by them that hastiness has its dangers. Hastiness may be a natural quality of some people. They need to train themselves on thinking and reflection. A person often regret a hasty action which causes him to err or to treat unjustly. An example of this is the reporter who hastens to publish a news item in order to gain a scoop, then it is proven that the news was incorrect and the reporter makes people lose their trust in the accuracy of the news. Another example is the father who punishes a child, or the superior who punishes his subordinates for some error, when it is later proven that they were innocent.

57. In chapter five, H.H. Pope Shenouda III identifies some Hindrances to Wisdom; one of which is misunderstanding and a lack of knowledge. Describe what is said we should do in an effort to gain understanding and knowledge in dealing with people. How will this help you succeed in your dealings with them?

Despite being very intelligent a man might be a failure in his married life. The reason of his failure may be his lack of knowledge of the psychology of the woman. He treats her as he treats men. The wise person would study the mentality, psychology, and circumstances of the woman so as to deal with her wisely. In the same way the woman should study the psychology of the man and his mentality so as to understand how to deal with him wisely. We say the same about treating children. We should study the psychology of the child and his mentality so as to know how to treat him wisely. That is why everyone should study the psychology, mentality, and circumstances of the people they deal with. Whether colleagues at work, superiors, subordinates, friends, or neighbors so that you can treat them in the way that suits them. If you study the psychology and mentality of the people you deal with, you will know the keys by which you can enter their heart and thus you will succeed in your dealings with them. Even if the keys go wrong, you will know how to lubricate them and try again to open the door and it will open. It is true that sometimes our failure in dealing with certain people is due more to our lack of knowledge of the way you treat them than the defects in them. That is why we need to study some of the points about dealing with people.

58. H.H. Pope Shenouda III points out that “tears can be a sign of repentance” in the “Wisdom in Dejection and Cheerfulness” section of chapter five. He cautions, however, that remaining in this state of dejection can turn into a stumbling block. What does this mean? In helping us live the life with God in continuous joy, what does Philippians 4:4 say we should do?

Tears can be a sign of repentance, an indication of tender feelings and sensitivity, and having fruits of mysticism and mortification to the world. Nevertheless the person who walks in it needs thorough discernment lest the matter leads him to the contrary. This is because continuity of sadness of countenance and lack of wisdom in walking in it may lead to many errors. How easy it is for the continuous dejection to turn into a stumbling block causing fear to those who wish to approach the life with God. They see that religious life is but weeping and dejection. This

is a distorted picture about the life with God, which God willed to be continuous joy, as the apostle said, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say rejoice." (Philippians 4:4) mentioning again that joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. The wise person knows the extent of contrition and tears, and knows how to mingle them with hope and solace, and knows how to live the life of joy in his repentance, contrition and tears, and not burning tears.

59. In speaking with regard to "Discernment in the Spiritual Practices," H.H. Pope Shenouda III mentions that "spiritual practices are not restraints and chains." What does he mean by this? (p.126, para.3)

Pope Shenouda means that the spiritual practice should not be dry, literal, and void of understanding. Spiritual practices are not restraints and chains. He who walks wisely in the sound spiritual life knows how to do one thing for the sake of God also. So for every situation, there is what suits it. And our teacher St. Paul talked about his own practices in matters and their opposites. He said, "Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." (Philippians 4:12) The children of God know when to do one thing and when to do its opposite with a clear conscience as the Holy Bible says, "Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep." (Romans 12:15) when everything under the heavens has its own time as the book of Ecclesiastes says, a time for weeping, a time for laughter, a time for keeping silence, and a time for speaking. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

60. In discerning between fear and love, H.H. Pope Shenouda III says "that fear is a stage that develops and turns into love and reverence." What does this mean?

Pope Shenouda said that fear is a stage that develops and turns into love and reverence. The father or teacher should not blame themselves if they reprimand a son or a student. They should not say in themselves nor in their confession that they have erred because they reprimanded someone and lost their meekness. Not on the contrary, their conscience should blame them if they had not been strict at the time when strictness was needed. After being reprimanded and learning what the person did wrong, they will learn to thank and love the person who reprimanded them.

61. In speaking of the importance of resisting sin, H.H. Pope Shenouda III quotes Galatians 5:17, which speaks to the struggle of resisting sin. What does Galatians 5:17 say, and what reason does the Pope give for the struggle? What is the remedy?

Galatians 5:17 says, "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another." The reason for the struggle that Pope Shenouda gave is because the love for God has not yet entered the heart and has not been established there. The remedy is the positive work.

62. In speaking of the importance of the love for God, it is said that sin will flee from your heart completely if the love of God enters it. Why is this? What does John 14:30 say with regard to the devil finding no place for himself inside your heart?

This is because if the love for God enters your heart you will not fall under the sway of sin and you need not pay great effort in struggling against it. But rather you will find yourself by nature alienated to sin. Also the devil will have no place for himself in your heart as the Lord Jesus Christ said, "... The ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me." (John 14:30)

63. If a person fills their heart with the love of God, sin will flee from it. How does a person attain the love for God? What does 1 John 4:16 say about this?

You attain this love through the positive spiritual work which leads to him to love God. And his love for God causes him not to err because "Love never fails." (1 Corinthians 13:8). 1 John 4:16 says, "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."

64. H.H. Pope Shenouda III teaches that positive work leads to attaining the love for God. What is the positive work that leads to all this? How can you become preoccupied with God? What does Psalm 119:97 say about this?

-The positive work that leads to the love of God is being mindful of God always. And that one's remembrance of God will generate His love in your heart. His love makes you think more of him. A person tastes the love of God and enjoys His communion in a sacred life. Each of these leads to and strengthens the other.

-You can become preoccupied with God if you increase your remembrance of Him, of His heavens, of His angels, of His words and commandments and of the eternal bliss with Him and, of His beautiful attributes and how He deals with people.

-Psalm 119:97 says "Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97). Which means that one's remembrance of God is the first positive work in one's spiritual life. God must be before you all the time. You remember him always just as David said in Psalm 119:97.

*65. In attaining the love for God, it is said that you should be mindful of God always. Since your remembrance of God will generate His love in your heart, what are some ways in which you can accomplish this?

Some ways in which you can accomplish remembrance of God are:

-thinking more of Him -trying to fill your heart with the love of God

66. In speaking of the inner work, H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that "repentance, whether in reconciling with God or with our fellow men, is an inner work." What is meant by this?

This means that in repentance, convincing the soul of the way of repentance and of the person's desire to repent, and of the need of the soul to feel remorse for its past life are all actions carried out from within. Repentance is not just abandoning the offenses from the outside because even if all things that offend encompass us externally, they cannot harm us so long as the heart from within prevails

-Saint John the Chrysostom says: "No one can harm a person unless the person harms himself".

67. It is said in the section on "The Inner Work in Upbringing and in the Ministry" that the love of God is far mightier than the rod and that it can peacefully repel every sin from the heart. What is the aim of the inner work? How does the inner work influence external matters?

-The aim of the inner work is first to prevail over self, and then to attain purity of the soul. This needs convincing the soul in a sound way.

-In order for the soul to be convinced, there should be a true understanding of external matters, of the meaning of life and its goal, the meaning of freedom and its boundaries, the meaning of strength, the meaning of beauty, and the meaning of manliness, and also the true concept of religion and the manner of dealing with people.

68. In discussing "The Inner Work in Prayer," H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that talking with God is the obvious external work in prayer, but undoubtedly there are more important inner works. What are they? Why is it important to sometimes silence your tongue and silence your heart in prayer?

-The more important inner works in prayer are feeling of the soul's contact with God and of being near Him, and the accompanying feelings of love, awe, faith, ardour, and rapture of being in his presence. Sometimes, prayer reaches beyond limits of talking with God as the spiritual elder once said: "Silence your tongue that your heart may speak, and silence your heart that God may speak"

-It is important to silence your tongue and silence your heart in prayer because it is first of all an encounter with man with God and secondly, it is listening to the voice of God within the soul, or at least the deep spiritual feeling of the Divine presence.

69. As an external work, fasting includes abstaining from food for a certain period of time and limiting what you eat to the unappetizing. What does the internal work of fasting include?

The internal work of fasting includes preventing the soul from any wrong desire, preventing the flesh from eating desirous foods, using the period of fasting to raise the spirit above the level of the flesh, giving concentrated spiritual nourishment which lasts even after the period of fasting.

70. Reading is an external work, but contemplation on what you read is an inner work. What does this mean?

This means that contemplation is more important than reading. Understanding is an inner work and so is the effect of the words on you and the carrying out of what you read. Therefore the inner work in reading means the spiritual work and not just the knowledge by which you add information to your mind. The inner work in reading is the transformation of the words into life.

71. With regard to the "Importance and Extent of Faithfulness," H.H. Pope Shenouda III talks about faithfulness in the whole of one's behavior and spiritual life. Which three relationships does he mention a man should be faithful to? What does the Lord Jesus Christ mention that faithfulness is the criterion of and the basis of?

-The three relationships in which a man should be faithful to are man's relationship with God, with others, and with himself.

-The Lord Jesus Christ mentions that faithfulness is the criterion of Judgement and the basis of entry into the Kingdom.

72. God showed his faithfulness to us to the extent of Incarnation and Redemption. In speaking of "Your Faithfulness to God," H.H. Pope Shenouda III points out that your faithfulness towards God means that you do not betray Him at all. What does this mean? Describe the analogy given regarding the wife who is faithful to her husband.

Being faithful towards God by not betraying him at all can be represented by the analogy of a wife who is faithful towards her husband. No matter how much freedom and trust he gives her, she is faithful to him and does not betray him nor does she have a relationship with another. Likewise your soul, which is the bride of Christ, should not betray Him with worldliness or with Satan, or with any lust or evil thought.

73. God showed his faithfulness to us to the extent of Incarnation and Redemption. H.H. Pope Shenouda III points out that your heart, which belongs to God, should not be opened to His enemies. What does this mean? In the story of the chaste Joseph, what does he say in Genesis 39:9 when contemplating the potential sin?

Your heart, which belongs to God, should not be opened to His enemies. This means that the faithful person should not be lenient towards any sin because sin is enmity with God. Nor should he entertain any erring thought but with all faithfulness he should repel it immediately. He should never accept any matter that would sever his cleaving to God, considering that every sin is foremost directed against God because it is against His love and incompatible with His will.

-In the story of the chaste Joseph, Joseph says: "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen.39:9).

74. H.H. Pope Shenouda III points out that faithfulness to God necessitates that a person be faithful in all his spiritual practices. What are the spiritual practices he refers to? When we are faithful in the spiritual practice of prayer, what does this allow us to do?

-The spiritual practices that a person should be faithful in are in his prayers (because he is conversing with God), in his reading of the Holy Bible (through which he listens to the voice of God), in his contemplation and in his praise, in his confessions, in his partaking of the Holy Communion and in his fasts.

-When we are faithful in the spiritual practice of prayer, this allows us *

75. In outlining your faithfulness to yourself, H.H. Pope Shenouda III lists the elements by which this is constituted. What are those elements? Explain the element of your faithfulness over your eternity.

-The elements of faithfulness to yourself are: your faithfulness over your eternity, your concern about your spirit and spiritual growth, your sincerity in resisting sin and your honesty with your time and intellect.

-He who is faithful over his eternity exerts every effort to attain it. He considers himself a sojourner on the earth, lusting for nothing therein. All his desires are focused over eternity.

76. In outlining your faithfulness to yourself, H.H. Pope Shenouda III lists the elements by which this is constituted. What are those elements? Explain the element of your faithfulness over your concern about your spirit and spiritual growth.

(see first part in q.75) Those who are faithful over their spirit always give attention to their spiritual growth. They are never sufficed with any spiritual level they attain because God asks them to be perfect and to be saints.

77. In outlining your faithfulness to yourself, H.H. Pope Shenouda III lists the elements by which this is constituted. What are those elements? Explain the element of your faithfulness to be on your guard not to leave any of the doors of your soul open to sin.

(see first part in q.75) With all faithfulness, close all the openings through which Satan can enter. Be faithful in controlling your intellect and senses because the senses are the door to the intellect, and the intellect is a door in which lusts enter into the heart.

78. In outlining your faithfulness to yourself, H.H. Pope Shenouda III lists the elements by which this is constituted. What are those elements? Explain the element of your faithfulness over your honesty with your time.

(see first part in q.75) The spiritual person is honest regarding time. He uses it in whatever it is beneficial to him in every respect; spiritually, intellectually and in serving others. He sees that time is part of his life, a talent entrusted to him, which he should not waste but spend in doing good.

79. "The faithful person, inasmuch as he is faithful over the kingdom of God within himself, is also faithful over the kingdom of God within others." What does it mean to be faithful over the kingdom of God within others?

Being faithful over the kingdom of God within others means that one loves others as himself. He cares for them as he cares for himself. He is concerned about their salvation, their growth, and their felicity as much as he cares for himself. For such is the commandment.

80. In answering the question, "How can I be faithful," H.H. Pope Shenouda III points out that we should be faithful in the few things and God will entrust us with much. What does this mean?

Being faithful in the few things and God will entrust us with much means that this is God's way and this is his promise. Therefore, this is all that you have to do. You do not have to think about getting to the destination in one go. You should know that one single step is the beginning of a long journey.

81. Part of being faithful to God is through ministry and dedication. What are some of the things H.H. Pope Shenouda III says you can do in order to live your whole life for the Lord?

Some of the things we can do in order to live our whole life for the Lord are; starting with the little we are capable of by giving ourselves spare time to the Lord, be faithful to every service commended to us then God will entrust us with dedication, be faithful in our own house, then the Holy Spirit will entrust us with the House of God, and be faithful over our own soul, then God will entrust us with the souls of others.

82. It is said that if we are faithful in resisting the willful sins, God will entrust us with the resistance of unintentional sins. What does this mean as it relates to the conscious and subconscious mind?

Be faithful in restraining your conscious mind, then God will entrust you with the control of the subconscious mind. Be faithful in resisting the errors committed while you are awake, then God will entrust you with resisting the errors during sleep. Be faithful in guarding your intellect during the day, then God will entrust you with purity of intellect during your sleep. If you are circumspect over the purity of your thoughts while you are awake, then the time will come when your thoughts will be pure when you are asleep. Let your thoughts be holy during the day then their sanctity will accompany you during the night.

83. In speaking of the virtue of love, H.H. Pope Shenouda III says, "If you are faithful in keeping the virtue of the fear of God then God will entrust you with the virtue of love." What does this mean?

This is because "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov.9:10). If you are faithful in the fear of the Lord and constantly keep his commandments, God will entrust you with the love that casts out fear.

84. In speaking of faithfulness, a common theme from H.H. Pope Shenouda III is that if we are faithful with a little, God will entrust us with much. What does this mean as it relates to prayer? Is our instruction to "pray without ceasing" too much for us?

By starting and being faithful with self coercion and forcing yourself to do good, you will inevitably reach the love of goodness because love for God and for goodness may not be the starting point, but it is an outcome of a long spiritual endeavor; therefore praying without ceasing is not too much for us for it is actually beneficial in the long run.

85. In speaking of "The Importance of Seriousness," H.H. Pope Shenouda III explains that seriousness is one of the most important characteristics of the spiritual path; without which man cannot attain his goal. Why is seriousness also an indication of manliness and strong personality?

He who is serious in his spirituality respects himself, his principles, his word, and S (abbreviation for spiritual) path he walks in

- Steadfast and unshakeable

- He is like a great ship sailing vigorously in the sea of life towards its goal, not like a boat hit and tossed about by the waves in every direction

86. Seriousness is not a trait that is held by everyone. Why is it that some people act seriously in their material and worldly affairs, whereas in their spiritual life there is no seriousness at all?

They are serious for sakes of earning money, gaining promotion, maintain position, fear of punishment

- As for S, no inner impetus prompting them towards seriousness, probably b/c fear of God not in their hearts or eternity in their eyes

- That's why they are not committed to clear and S path

87. He who is not serious in his spirituality fluctuates up and down, and his walk is unstable. He who is serious, however, is never indifferent over God's prerogatives. Why does a serious person not give excuses for himself or present justifications for his sins? How did the chaste Joseph and Daniel the Prophet demonstrate their seriousness?

- B/c man should maintain manliness irrespective of external circumstances

- Joseph – was constrained by circumstances but did not succumb/yield to sin with the pretext that he was a slave under the authority of another and his master's wife was capable of harming him

- Daniel – did not permit himself to eat of the king's delicacies although he was a captive, governed by rules

88. He who is not serious in his spirituality fluctuates up and down, and his walk is unstable. He who is serious, however, is never indifferent over God's prerogatives. Why is the spiritual person serious in his repentance? What does Hebrews 12:4 say about the seriousness of resisting sin? Which three saints are mentioned as examples of repentance?

-he abandons sin , he does it seriously and without return

- serious in repulsing assaults of sins

- Not like the Hebrews who St. Paul upbraided saying *"You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin"* (Hebrews 12:4)

- Does not postpone his repentance as did Felix the governor (Acts 24:25) and Agrippa (Acts 26:28) but is like the Prodigal son who rose immediately to his father repenting w/ a contrite heart

- As long as the repentant realizes the sin, he would never return to it again

- Sts. Mary of Egypt, Pelagia, Moses the Black

-Repentance was turning point in their lives without return to sin

- moved from sin to purity to sanctity to perfection

- transformed from sinners to saints

- became examples of lives of righteousness and a blessing for others and S advisors

- serious in denouncing Satan and all his deeds

- serious in their reconciliation with God and desire to live in virtue

89. In speaking of the "Qualities of the Serious Person," H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that he who is serious in his spiritual path is distinguished by continual growth. This seriousness gives him spiritual ardour. What does this ardour prompt him to do? What does he strive for?

– Ardor prompts him to advance always

- strives for sake of purity and perfection to the farthest extent
- gives God all his might, resources, will, whole heart diligently and persistently
- acts w/ all grace given to him exerting all his efforts w/out delinquency
- grows everyday cleaving to God, abiding in Him, in the depths of Divine love, comprehending and practicing virtues
- does not pander to his ego, gratify it, give it excuses for any shortcomings and forces it to do God's work in order to get used to it and perform it with love

90. In speaking of the "Qualities of the Serious Person," H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that he who is serious is not mindful of his personal desires, but sacrifices every pleasure for the sake of the Lord. What do those who were trained in seriousness always do for the sake of the Lord? How did Saint Paul of Tamouh exemplify this? What did David the Prophet say about this in Psalm 132:3-5?

. – They always labored for the sake of the Lord .

- always sacrifice their comfort for the sake of their S life
- St. Paul of Tamouh – exerted himself in asceticism in striving and subjecting his body to his spirit so much that the Lord said to him "Enough exertion, my beloved Paul!"
- *"Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house, or go up t the comfort of my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for the Lord and a dwelling place for the mighty God of Jacob" (Psalm 132: 3-5)*

91. H.H. Pope Shenouda III says about meticulousness that "he who is meticulous is not only meticulous when he is among people, but even more so when he is alone in his private room." Why is meticulous behavior relatively easy in the presence of people?

by nature we do not like to be criticized by them or we fear being exposed b4 them and our defects and faults being revealed to them

92. H.H. Pope Shenouda III provides a specific definition of meticulousness. What is meticulousness?

- circumspection on the least error
- sound and discreet heedful behavior, pursuing the utmost possible perfect position, w/ no indifference, slackness, negligence

93. In H.H. Pope Shenouda III's description of a spiritual person who is meticulous in his speech, he says that "rashness in speech is one of the reasons of its lack of meticulousness." Why does rashness in speech lead to the lack of meticulousness? What does the Apostle say about this in James 1:19?

– rashness is giving one’s own opinion, in judging others, and in giving way to anger exposes the person to errors and causes him to lose meticulousness in speech

- *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (James 1:19)*

94. The spiritual person is meticulous in resisting sin, cautious not to fall into it. How does H.H. Pope Shenouda III instruct that a spiritual person should be meticulous in resisting sin? What does Ephesians 5:15 say about the spiritual person being meticulous in all his behavior?

–does not wait until sin approaches and then resists it but is careful to keep away from it, sealing all openings so it does not access to approach him

- if attacked by sin, very meticulous in expelling it

- *“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise”(Ephesians 5:15)*

95. The devil fights meticulousness and calls it rigidity or lack of flexibility. As spiritual aspirants, where should our flexibility be?

–By saying this, the devil aims to ensure that the S person will not endure the term “rigidity” and will abandon meticulousness

- However, the devil criticizes the pharisaism and literalism, not meticulousness

-Flexibility does not mean detachment from values, but it is carrying out the commandments and not flexibility in breaking it

96. H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that “the spiritual man is victorious in all his spiritual warfare.” Over what three things is he victorious? What is the result of this victory?

- victorious over the self

- over material matters

- over devils

- result: receives crowns in heaven on that Day

- that's why some divide the church into two

- Militant Church-church on earth

- Victorious Church-church in heaven during the period of striving on earth, fought and prevailed

97. In the section speaking about “The Importance and Blessing of Victory,” H.H. Pope Shenouda III points out that God permitted spiritual warfare, temptation and devils. Why is it that He puts our will to the test? What does Saint Paul the Apostle say about putting on the armor of God in Ephesians 6:11-12?

- to show how far we are worthy of His crowns

- for this reason, S fathers said "No one is crowned except he who prevails. No one prevails except he who fights. No one fights except he who has an enemy"

- "Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against S hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:11-12)

98. In order to successfully engage in spiritual warfare, we are called to put on the "whole armor of God." Ephesians 6:11-12 talks about this. What does this Bible verse say?

Refer back to last part of q.97

99. In speaking about not having despair even if you fall many times, H.H. Pope Shenouda III quotes one of the Fathers in saying, "The soldier who is wounded by the enemy is rewarded with medals and not only the soldier who overcomes and kills his enemies." How did H.H. Pope Shenouda III explain what the Father meant by this?

so long as the soldier did not flee from the battle but fought and struggled he is rewarded no matter how much the enemy wounded him b/c this is not defeat, but striving

100. In speaking of the causes of victory, H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that the most important thing is that God fights in you and fights for you. Along with the help of God you must have complete circumspection. What are the seven means by which we do this according to H.H. Pope Shenouda III?

Keeping away from the causes of sin and escaping from them as best as you can

- be meticulous in your life and be on your guard even from the things which seem paltry

- in order to prevail strive with all your might and do not surrender in the warfare

- in order to prevail you have to strengthen the love of God in your heart by being regular in the means of grace

- let your spiritual principles be sound and let your aim be God and his kingdom

- if you want to prevail preserve continually the humility of your heart

- always feel that you are a beginner because this feeling prompts you to advance and grow. Those whose growth ceased, their ardor also ceased, and they became listless and weak and were liable to fall

101. In speaking of the causes of victory, H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that the most important thing is that God fights in you and fights for you. Along with the help of God you must have complete circumspection. One of the means is keeping away from the causes of sin and escaping from them as best you can. How does H.H. Pope Shenouda III say we should do this?

angel said to Lot: "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you or stay anywhere in the plain" (Genesis 19:17)

St Paul to Timothy "Flee also youthful lusts" (2 Timothy 2:22)

- practical example of the chaste Joseph who escaped for his life that he may not fall
 - one of the Fathers: "He who is near the objects of sin fights two wars, one from the outside and another from the inside. But he who is far from is tempted from the inside only"
 - therefore ascertain from where lapses come to you and abandon their causes
- remembering: "God divided the light from the darkness" (Gen 1:4) "And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you" (Matthew 5:30)

102. In speaking of the causes of victory, H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that the most important thing is that God fights in you and fights for you. Along with the help of God you must have complete circumspection. One of the means is striving with all your might and not surrendering in the warfare. How does H.H. Pope Shenouda III say we should do this? What does Hebrews 12:4 say about resisting sin?

- rebut evil thoughts and do not entertain them and do not leave them to increase within you
 - resist lusts and bad desires and do not think of putting them into practice, however pressing they may be
 - "You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin" (Heb 12:4)
 - your escape from sin, your striving against it and your meticulousness are proof that you declare that you are cleaving to God and that your will is good
 - this encourages grace to work in you

103. In speaking of the causes of victory, H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that the most important thing is that God fights in you and fights for you. Along with the help of God you must have complete circumspection. One of the means is strengthening the love of God in your heart by being regular in the means of grace. How does H.H. Pope Shenouda III say we should do this?

- most of those who fall are detached from the means of grace; from prayer, contemplation, reading, fasting, S gatherings, confession, communion
- cleave to those means of grace
 - always be mindful of God and bring into your heart the S feelings which keep you away from sin

104. In speaking of the causes of victory, H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that the most important thing is that God fights in you and fights for you. Along with the help of God you must have complete circumspection. One of the means is letting your spiritual principles be sound and let your aim be God and His kingdom. How does H.H. Pope Shenouda III say we should do this?

know that the more additional aims you have the more they will prevail over your emotions and sever you from God

- then you will not be able to worship two masters: God and worldly aims
- always try to give your depths to God alone
- whenever other aims come into your heart be alert and reject them

105. In speaking of the causes of victory, H.H. Pope Shenouda III says that the most important thing is that God fights in you and fights for you. Along with the help of God you must have complete circumspection. One of the means is preserving continually the humility of your heart. How does preserving humility do this? (p.213, para.2)

humility makes you seek counsel, depending not on your own understanding

- humility makes you acknowledge your sins
- gives you contrition of heart and God comes closer to you with His grace and help
- makes you pray asking for God's intervention in your life instead of depending on your intelligence and your capabilities