



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of
the Southern United States

The Monthly Message
to the Priests' Wives
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Psycho-spiritual Hooks

Psychologists believe that everyone has different psychological “hooks” that make him vulnerable to be caught through them. They represent breaches in their psychological defensive wall that manipulators know well about them and get use of them to compel them to fulfill their requests. These hooks differ from one to another and one can have more than one hook within him.

Hooks are generally classified into two categories:

- 1) **Most wanted needs:** they represent a deep vacuum within the person that needs continuous satisfaction and makes him enslaved to the sources of this satisfaction.
- 2) **Greatest fears:** they nurture within him the feeling of insecurity and therefore he becomes enslaved also to the sources that grant him security feeling.

Hence we can realize well that one is no more free but enslaved whether to the sources of his satisfaction or the sources of his security feeling even if they are fake sources.

As the devil is the greatest manipulator and the very skilled hunter of souls he starts first by planting the seeds of these hooks within the soul. If this soul is predisposed to receive these seeds, then the roots of these hooks expand and become strongly embedded in her. After the devil gets sure that his hooks are well established within the soul he starts to use his fishing rod here and there to catch people by all means. The numerous the hooks within the person the easiest and fastest he is caught by the devil. Actually, if we contemplate all the devil’s games and tricks we find them all working in man whether through an urgent need or a strong fear.

In fact, these hooks were not present within man except after fall. They are the source of corruption that entered into him and the captivity that enslaved him. As for Jesus Christ, He bore true witness to Himself when He said, *“The ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me”* (John 14:30). **Yes, Jesus Christ has no any hooks through which the**

devil can catch Him as He is without sin and therefore without the corruption of need and fear.

Therefore, saints and ascetics struggled to reach the blessed state of “dispassion” in which one needs nothing and is afraid of nothing. St. Paul actually reached this state and described it saying, *“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). Also the most amazing thing is that the classification of psychological hooks into needs and fears made by psychologists is the same classification made by St. Augustine many centuries before when he said, “I remained on the summit of the world when I was scared of nothing and desired nothing”.

A priest's wife is more predisposed than others to have a lot of hooks within her due to her role as a priest's wife imposing on her suffering from lack of fulfillment of many of her needs and from being subjected to a lot of fears. Nevertheless, I have reservations when we say that the role of priest's wife imposes on her some sufferings because a priest's wife who is full of the Holy Spirit and guided by Him is not subjected into any compulsions as it is written, *“But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is*

rightly judged by no one” (1 Corinthians 2:15). Anyway, this is a field of great struggle where a priest's wife needs to toil psycho-spiritually so that when she gets rid of all feelings of deprivation and insecurity *“a great calm”* comes within her (Matthew 8:26).

The first step in this journey of struggle is to recognize the different psycho-spiritual hooks embedded in one's soul in order for him to pluck them and obtain freedom.

A priest's wife can recognize her hooks by answering the following questionnaire:

First Question

* Read each item on the list below, and rate each on a 1 to 5 point scale where

1 = no need at all

2 = low need

3 = moderately strong need

4 = strong need

5 = very strong to strongest need

- Money - Authority and control - Power
- Position /status - Security - Love
- Care - Interest - Sexual fulfillment
- Emotional fulfillment - Approval - Acceptance

- Family atmosphere - Shared life with partner
- Intimate stable relationships - Happiness
- Job / career - Material possessions
- Success / achievement - Friendship
- Health - Competence - Belongingness
- Other (specify):

* Extract the items you rated as 3 or higher. Write them in a separate **yellow** paper. List them in a descending order from rate 5 to rate 3.

Second Question

* Read each item on the list below, and rate each on a 1 to 5 point scale where

1 = not worried at all

2 = low degree of worry or fear

3 = moderate degree of worry or fear

4 = strong degree of worry or fear

5 = very strong to strongest degree of worry or fear

- Fear of loss of money - Fear of loss of control
- Fear of loss of status and prestige
- Fear of loss of job / career - Fear of loss of love
- Fear of loss of others' interest
- Fear of loss of sex / sexual fulfillment
- Fear of loss of emotional fulfillment
- Fear of confrontation - Fear of conflicts
- Fear of rejection - Fear of abandonment

- Fear of failure - Fear of feeling guilt
- Fear of feeling shame - Fear of criticism
- Fear of loss of respect - Fear of aging
- Fear of feeling helpless - Fear of loss of health
- Fear of tribulations and sufferings
- Other (specify):

* Extract the items you rated as 3 or higher. Write them in a separate **green** paper. List them in a descending order from rate 5 to rate 3.

* Put both **the yellow paper** that represents the *hooks of deprivation* and **the green paper** that represents the *hooks of fear* before God in your prayers. Mention each one of their items by name asking the Holy Spirit to help you pluck these hooks from your soul.

* Share both **the yellow paper** and **the green paper** with your father of confession asking for his guidance regarding these items.

* Share both **the yellow paper** and **the green paper** with your husband priest asking for his help to pluck these hooks from within your soul.