



## **Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States**

### **Monthly Message for the Priests Wives**

**July 2024**

## **Overbearing or Controlling Behavior**

### **Volume 6**

#### **Neglecting Personal Spiritual Growth:**

- **Academic Definition:** Neglecting personal spiritual growth refers to the failure or disregard of individuals, particularly leaders, to invest time and effort in their own spiritual development and relationship with the divine. In academic literature, this concept is often discussed in the context of religious leadership, emphasizing the importance of personal spirituality for effective pastoral care and leadership.

- **References and Studies:**

**2- "Leadership and Spirituality in Higher Education" by Michael J. Cieslak and Daniel M. Cable:**

This study explores the relationship between leadership and spirituality in higher education, discussing the positive impact of spiritual growth on leadership effectiveness.

**3- "Pastoral Burnout: Causes and Coping Strategies" by Archie Smith Jr.:**

The article delves into pastoral burnout and identifies neglecting personal spiritual growth as a contributing factor. It emphasizes the importance of self-care and spiritual nourishment for effective pastoral care.

**4- "Religious Leadership: A Review and Future Research Agenda" by Kevin Flannelly and Kathleen Galek:**

The paper discusses the challenges and responsibilities of religious leadership, highlighting the significance of personal spiritual growth for effective leadership within religious communities.

- **Avoidance:** Prioritize personal spiritual development through prayer, study, and community involvement.
- **Biblical Reference:** Psalm 119:105 - "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."
- **Biblical Stories:**

#### **2- Jesus' Withdrawal for Prayer (Mark 1:35-39):**

Jesus, despite being a busy leader, regularly withdrew to solitary places for prayer and spiritual communion. This story emphasizes the importance of personal spiritual practices for leaders.

#### **3- Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42):**

Martha is busy with serving, while Mary sits at Jesus' feet to listen. Jesus commends Mary for choosing the "better" thing, highlighting the importance of prioritizing personal spiritual growth over busy activities.

#### **4- Paul's Exhortation to Timothy (1 Timothy 4:16):**

In advising Timothy, Paul emphasizes the importance of personal spiritual growth, urging him to watch his life and doctrine closely for the sake of his own salvation and the salvation of others.

- **Implications for Pastoral Care, Leadership, and Interpersonal Relationships:**
  - 2- Impact on Leadership Effectiveness:** Neglecting personal spiritual growth can hinder a leader's ability to provide effective pastoral care, guidance, and spiritual support.
  - 3- Role Modeling:** Leaders who prioritize personal spiritual growth serve as positive role models, inspiring and guiding others in their spiritual journeys.
  - 4- Community Well-being:** A leader's spiritual health contributes to the overall well-being of the religious community, fostering a spiritually vibrant and supportive environment.
- **Conclusion:** Academic literature and biblical stories converge to emphasize the importance of personal spiritual growth for effective pastoral care, leadership, and community well-being within religious settings. Leaders are encouraged to prioritize their spiritual development to better serve and guide their communities.

- **Funny Stories:**

- 1- The Case of the Forgetful Devotee:

In a close-knit religious community, there was a devotee known for their forgetfulness. Despite attending weekly services, this individual often forgot to bring their prayer book, hymnal, or even their glasses. One day, the forgetful devotee arrived at the service without any of these essentials. Instead of getting frustrated, the community rallied together and decided to create a personalized "Forgetfulness Kit" for the devotee. The kit included a spare prayer book, an extra hymnal, and a pair of glasses. The community humorously named it the "Spiritual Survival Kit," turning the situation into a light-hearted reminder of the importance of personal spiritual tools.

- Moral: Even in moments of forgetfulness, a community that responds with humor can create a supportive and caring environment.

- 2- The Tale of the Pajama Meditation Group:

In a community that valued daily meditation, there was one member who struggled to find time for their spiritual practices due to a busy schedule. Instead of giving up on meditation altogether, this individual decided to form a unique group: the "Pajama Meditation Club." Members gathered early in the morning, still in their pajamas, for a brief but focused meditation session. The community embraced the idea, recognizing the importance of adapting spiritual practices to fit individual lifestyles. The Pajama Meditation Club became a humorous yet meaningful reminder that personal spiritual growth can be cultivated in various ways.

- Moral: A community that encourages creativity in spiritual practices fosters an inclusive and adaptable environment for personal growth.
- These stories aim to use humor to address the concept of neglecting personal spiritual growth within a religious community, emphasizing the importance of support and adaptability in nurturing individual spiritual journeys.