

TAKING GOD SERIOUSLY

“But the end of all things is at hand; therefore
be serious and watchful in your prayers.”

– 1 Pet. 3:7

INTRODUCTION

- Seriousness is what makes saints
- Any person who faces any endeavor with seriousness will succeed
 - Student, Marriage, Service
- Four spiritual personality types
 - Joker
 - Dreamer
 - Talker
 - Serious

THE JOKER

- Everything is a joke
- Lot's sons-in-law
 - “So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, ‘Get up, get out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city!’ But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.”
(Gen. 19:14)
- Lacks: Conviction



THE DREAMER

- Dreams end as dreams
- Makes no progress to change dreams to actions
- Lacks: Motivation and direction



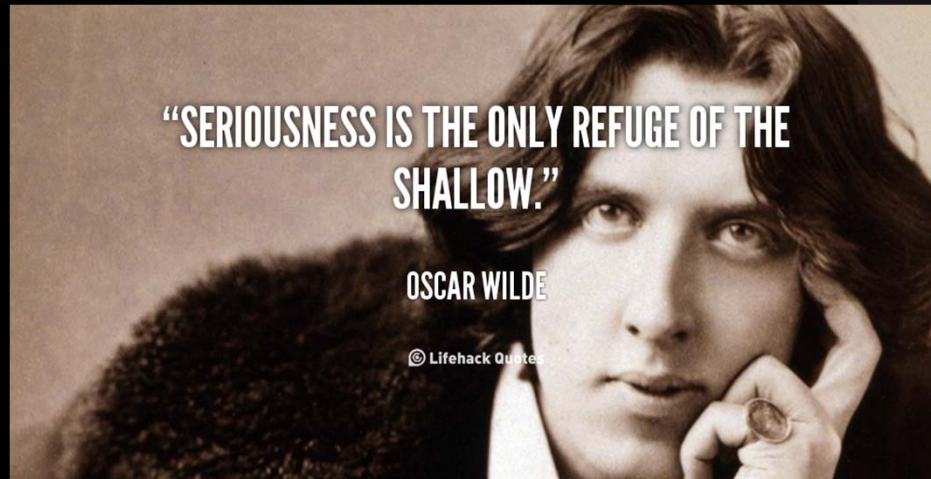
TALKER

- Many promises
- Usually have good intention
- Ex: A scribe and a disciple
 - “Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, ‘Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.’ Then another of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, let me first go and bury my father.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.’” (Matt. 8:19-22)
- Lack: Commitment



THE SERIOUS

- Seriousness is...



**SERIOUSNESS IS
A DISEASE.**

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh

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“God is always joking. Look at your own life -- it is a joke! Look at other people's lives, and you will find jokes and jokes and jokes. Seriousness is illness; seriousness has nothing spiritual about it. Spirituality is laughter, spirituality is joy, spirituality is fun.”

Osho

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THE SERIOUS

- Have small, simple, and achievable dreams that they act upon
- “But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.” (Matt. 5:37)
- These will be close to God
- Consider the two sons in Matt. 21

MATTHEW 21:28-31

- “But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?”



THE SPIRITUALLY SERIOUS...

DO NOT LOOK BACK

- “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” (Lk. 9:62)
- Consider Lot’s wife and Israelites in the wilderness
- Perhaps the speed of our growth may decrease, but should not cease or regress
- “I do not recall a demon ever got me to fall twice in the same sin.” (Unknown saint)
- Some people regret the spiritual way



DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE

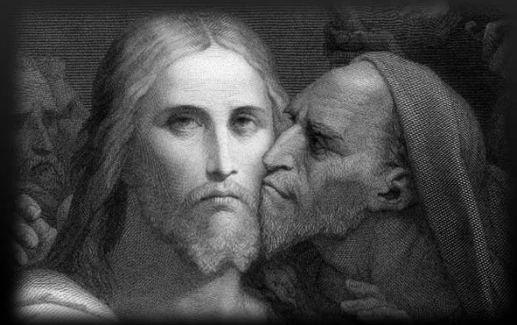
A. Willingness to take extreme measures if necessary

- Joseph the Righteous in Potiphar's house
- “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.” (Matt. 5:29)

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE

B. Stay the course

- Do not get cold
- “Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.” (Rev. 2:4)
- Ex: Judas
- Ex: St. Paul, the martyrs



DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE

C. Do not procrastinate

- Ex: King Agrippa
- “And when they [people of Athens] heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, ‘We will hear you again on this matter.’ So Paul departed from among them. However, some men joined him and believed.” (Acts 17:32)
- “Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you.” (Jn. 12:35)



KEEPS ALL THEIR PROMISES

- “I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman.” (Job 31:1)
- Story: College student and family vacation
- What if I have trouble keeping my promises to God?
 - Focus on one promise at a time



SERIOUS IN THEIR REPENTANCE

- Story: HH Pope Shenouda's days in the monastery
 - Worker: "Confession is a promise to God."
 - "Far be it Abouna, that was a confession."
- How to be serious in repentance?
 - Pick one area that I lack
 - Story: Girl and her Pepsi



SERIOUS IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- Punctuality regarding spiritual disciplines
 - Prayers, liturgy attendance, etc.
- Carry a sense of responsibility
- Impose vows upon themselves
 - Ex: I will not talk to a person before talking to God
 - “Lord, remember David And all his afflictions; How he swore to the Lord, And vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob: ‘Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house, Or go up to 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, A dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.’” (Ps. 132:1-5)
- Self-evaluation
 - Frequently

SUMMARY: THE SERIOUS...

1. Do not look back
2. Devoted to the cause
 - Willingness to take extreme measures if necessary
 - Stay the course
 - Do not procrastinate
3. Keep all their promises to God
4. Serious in their repentance
5. Serious in their relationship with God