

The Way of Perfection

Section 2: Foundations of Prayer

Chapters 4-7 (summary)

Love of Neighbor (Charity)

Saint Teresa of Avila

Introduction

Now, Daughters ... what do you think we must be like if we are not to be considered very bold by God and the world? Clearly, we must **work hard**, and it helps a great deal to have **lofty thoughts** so that we will exert ourselves and make our **deeds** comply with our **thoughts**. For if we strive to **observe our rule** and **constitutions** very carefully, I hope ... that our prayer will be heard.

I am not beseeching you to do something new, my daughters, but only that we **observe** what we **profess** ... this is our **vocation** and **obligation**

2. Our **primitive rule** states that we must **pray without ceasing** ... It is the most important aspect of the rule—the fasts, disciplines and silence the order commands will not be wanting ... If prayer is to be **genuine**, it must be helped by these other things; **prayer** and **comfortable** living are incompatible.

3. It is about prayer that you have asked me to say something ... Before I say anything about ... prayer, I shall mention some things that are **necessary** for those who seek to follow the **way of prayer**; so necessary that even those who are not very contemplative, can be far advanced in the service of the Lord if they possess these things ...

4. ... I shall not **burden** you with many things ... we shall do what our **holy fathers** established and observed ... It would be wrong to ... try to learn this path from anyone else. I shall enlarge on only **three things** which are from our **constitutions**. It is important to understand how much the **practice** of these three things helps us to possess ... the peace our Lord recommended so highly to us. The **first** of these is **love for one another** (or charity); the **second** is **detachment** for all created things; and the **third** is true **humility** which is in fact the **main practice** and **embraces all the others**. Amen