

# Step 4 on Blessed and Ever-Memorable Obedience - Part 2

by St. John Climacus

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*St. John Climacus emphasizes the profound connection between obedience, humility, and spiritual growth, warning against the dangers of pride and isolation in the pursuit of virtue.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 25:9, Proverbs 3:6, Proverbs 22:4, Philipians 2:3, James 4:7, James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:5-6

**Topics:** "Spiritual Obedience", "Christian Humility"

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## Description

St. John Climacus emphasizes the importance of true obedience by illustrating how imagining the presence of a superior can lead to genuine obedience. He highlights the dangers of pride and the need to attribute all achievements to the guidance of spiritual fathers. St. John warns against the pitfalls of solitary practices that can lead to conceit and deception by demons. He stresses the significance of obedience in eluding snares set by the devil and the necessity of humility in attaining dispassion and discernment.

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## Transcript

54. When in the absence of the superior we imagine his face and think that he is always standing by us, and avoid every meeting, or word, or food, or sleep, or anything else that we think he would not like, then we have really learnt true obedience. Base-born children regard the absence of their teacher as a joy, but legitimate ones think it a loss.

55. I once asked one of the most experienced fathers and pressed him to tell me how humility is obtained by obedience. He said: 'The obedient man who has discernment, even if he raises the dead and receives the gift of tears and freedom from conflict, will still think that it is the prayer of his spiritual father that has done it, and he remains foreign and alien to vain presumption. For how could

1 Psalm lxx, 20.

he possibly pride himself on what is done, as he himself admits, by the help of his father, and not by his own effort?'

56. But the practice of the above virtues is unknown to the solitary.<sup>1</sup> For his rigours have brought him conceit and suggest to him that his achievements are due to his own effort.

57. He who lives in obedience has eluded two snares and remains in future an obedient servant of Christ.

## The first snare

58. The devil battles with those in obedience, sometimes to defile them with bodily pollutions and make them hard-hearted, and sometimes to provoke more than usual restlessness. At other times he makes them dry and barren, sluggish in prayer, drowsy and confused by spiritual darkness, in order to tear them away from their struggle by making them think they have gained nothing by their obedience but are only backsliding. For he does not allow them time to reflect that often the providential withdrawal of our imagined goods or blessings leads us to the deepest humility.

59. However, some have often repelled that deceiver by patience; but while he is still speaking, another angel<sup>2</sup> stands by us and after a little while tries to hoodwink us in another way.

## The second snare

I have seen some living in obedience who, through their father's direction, became filled with compunction, meek, temperate, zealous, free from inner conflicts, and fervent. But demons came to them and sowed in them the thought that they now had the qualifications for the solitary life,<sup>3</sup> and that in solitude they would attain to freedom from passion<sup>4</sup> as the final prize. Thus deceived, they left the harbour and put out to sea, but when a storm came down upon them they were pitifully exposed to danger from this foul and bitter ocean through being unprovided with pilots.

60. This sea is bound to be stirred up and roused and enraged, so as to cast out of it again on to the dry land the wood, and hay, and all the corruption that was brought down into it by the rivers of the passions. Let us watch nature and we shall find that after a storm at sea there comes a deep calm.

61. He who is sometimes obedient to his father and sometimes disobedient is like a person who sometimes puts lotion in his eyes and sometimes quicklime. For it is said, When one builds and another pulls down, what profit have they had but the labour?<sup>5</sup>

62. Do not be deceived, son and obedient servant of the Lord, by the spirit of conceit, so that you confess your own sins to your master as if they were another person's. You cannot escape shame except by shame. It is often the habit of the demons to persuade us either not to confess, or to do so as if we were confessing another person's sins, or to lay the blame for our sin on others. Lay bare, lay bare your wound to the physician and, without being ashamed, say: 'It is my wound, Father, it is my plague, caused by my own negligence, and not by anything else. No one is to blame for this, no man, no spirit, no body, nothing but my own carelessness.'

1 Gk. ἡσυχαστῆς.

2 I.e. devil.

3 'Holy quiet.' Gk. ἡσυχία. 4 Or, 'dispassion'.

5 Ecclesiasticus xxxiv, 23.

63. At confession be like a condemned criminal in disposition and in outward appearance and in thought. Cast your eyes to the earth, and, if possible, sprinkle the feet of your judge and physician, as the feet of Christ, with your tears.

64. If everything depends on habit, and follows upon it, then still more do the virtues depend on habit, for they have God as their great collaborator.

65. You will not labour many years, son, in search of blessed inner peace, if in the beginning you surrender yourself with all your soul to indignities.

66. Do not think that it is improper to make your confession to your helper, as to God, in a prostrate position. I have seen condemned criminals, by their sorry appearance and violent confession and entreaty, soften the severity of the judge and change his anger into mercy. That is why even John the Baptist required confession before baptism of those who came to him, not because he himself needed to know their sins, but so as to effect their salvation.

67. Let us not be surprised if even after confession we are still attacked; for it is better to struggle with thoughts than with conceit.

68. Do not be over-eager and do not be carried away when you hear tales of the silent<sup>1</sup> and hermit fathers. For you are marching in the army of the First Martyr. And if you fall, do not leave the practice-ground, for then especially more than ever we need a physician. He who strikes his foot against a stone when he has help, would certainly not only have stumbled unaided but would have died.

69. When we are brought down, then the demons quickly attack us, and seizing on a reasonable, or rather unreasonable pretext, they advise us to adopt the life of a solitary. The aim of our enemies is to inflict wounds upon us as we sin.

70. When a physician protests his incompetence, then you have to go to another, because few are healed without a physician. And who would think of contradicting us when we say that every ship that encounters shipwreck with a skilled pilot would be utterly lost without a pilot?

71. From obedience comes humility, and from humility comes dispassion; for the Lord remembered us in our humility and redeemed us from our enemies.<sup>2</sup> Therefore nothing prevents us from saying that from obedience comes dispassion, through which the goal of humility is attained. For humility is the beginning of dispassion, as Moses is the beginning of the Law; and the daughter perfects the mother, as Mary perfects the Synagogue.

72. Those sick souls who try out a physician and receive help from him, and then abandon him out of preference for another before they are completely healed, deserve every punishment from God. Do not run from the hand of him who has brought you to the Lord, for you will never in your life esteem anyone like him.

73. It is dangerous for an inexperienced soldier to leave his regiment and engage in single combat. And it is not without peril for a monk to attempt the solitary life before he has had much experience and practice in the struggle with the animal passions. The one subjects his body to danger, the other risks his soul. Two are better than one, says Scripture.<sup>3</sup> That is to say, 'It is better for a son to be with his father, and to struggle with his attachments with the help of the divine power of the Holy Spirit.' He who deprives a blind man of his leader, a flock of its shepherd, a lost man of his guide, a child of its father, a patient of his doctor, a ship of its pilot, imperils all. And he who attempts unaided to struggle with the spirits gets killed by them.

1 Or, 'hesychast'.

2 Psalm cxxxv, 23--4. 3 Ecclesiastes iv, 9.

74. Let those entering a hospital for the first time indicate their pains, and let those entering upon obedience show their humility. For the former, the first sign of their health is the relief of their pains, and for the latter a growing self-condemnation; and there is no other sign so unerring.

75. Let your conscience be the mirror of your obedience, and it is enough.

76. Those living in silence subject to a father, have only demons working against them. But those living in a community struggle with demons and human beings. The former, being always under the eyes of the master, keep his commands more strictly; but the latter, on account of his absence, break them to some extent. However, those who are careful and industrious more than make up for this failing by enduring collisions and knocks, and win double crowns.

77. Let us keep guard over ourselves with all care. For when a harbour is full of ships it is easy for them to get crushed by each other, especially if they are secretly riddled with bad temper as by some worm.

78. Let us practise extreme silence and ignorance in the presence of the superior. For a silent man is a son of wisdom, always acquiring much knowledge.

79. I have seen a religious who used to snatch the words from his superior's lips, but I despaired of his obedience when I saw it led to pride and not to humility.

80. Let us keep wide awake with all vigilance, take care with all carefulness, watch with all watchfulness as to when and how service should be preferred to prayer. For you cannot do all things at all times.

81. Attend to yourself in the presence of your brethren, and never try to appear more correct than they are in any circumstance whatever. For if you do, you will have wrought a double ill: you will sting them by your false and hypocritical zeal and you will give yourself a motive for presumption.

82. Be zealous within your soul, without showing it in the least outwardly, either by visible sign or by word or by a hint. And you will only do this when you stop looking down on your neighbour. But if you are still inclined to do this, become like your brethren so that you do not differ from them simply in being conceited.

83. I saw an inexperienced disciple who in the presence of certain people boasted of the achievements of his teacher, thinking to win glory for himself from another's harvest, but he only earned for himself dishonour, for everybody asked him: 'But how could a good tree grow such a barren branch?'

84. It is not when we courageously endure the derision of our father that we are judged patient, but when we endure it from all manner of men. For we bear with our father both out of respect and as a duty to him.

85. Eagerly drink scorn and insult as the water of life from everyone who wants to give you the drink that cleanses from lust. Then a deep purity will dawn in your soul and the divine light will not grow dim in your heart.

86. If anyone sees that the brotherhood is appeased by his efforts he should not boast of it in his heart, because thieves are around. Always remember Him who said: When you have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have only done what we were bound to do.<sup>1</sup> The judgment on our labours we shall know at the time of our death.

87. A monastery is an earthly heaven. Therefore let us tune our heart to be like angels serving the Lord. Sometimes those who live in this heaven have hearts of stone. But sometimes again, through compunction, they attain to consolation, in such a way as to avoid conceit or presumption, and they lighten their labours with tears.

1 St. Luke xvii, 10.

88. A little fire softens a large piece of wax. So, too, a small in dignity often softens, sweetens and wipes away suddenly all the fierceness, uncouthness, insensibility and hardness of our heart.

89. I once saw two sitting in hiding and watching the labours and listening to the groans of the ascetics. But one was doing this in order to emulate them, the other in order, when the chance came, openly to mock and to impede God's labourer in his good work.

90. Do not be so unreasonably silent as to annoy and embitter others. And do not be slow in your gait and actions when ordered to hasten. Otherwise, you will be worse than the possessed and the rebellious. Often I have seen, as Job says,<sup>1</sup> souls suffering from slowness of character, but sometimes from eagerness. And I was amazed at the diversity of evil.

91. He who is not alone but is with others cannot derive so much profit from psalmody as from prayer; for the confusion of voices renders the psalms indistinct.

92. Constantly wrestle with your thought, and whenever it wanders call it back to you. God does not require from those still under obedience prayer completely free of distractions. Do not despond when your thoughts are filched, but remain calm, and unceasingly recall your mind. Unbroken recollection is proper only to an angel.

93. He who has secretly vowed not to retire from the struggle till his last breath and to endure a thousand deaths of body and soul, will not easily fall into any of these defects. For inconstancy of heart and infidelity to one's place always cause stumblings and disasters. Those who easily go from place to place are complete failures, for nothing causes fruitlessness so much as impatience.

94. If you come to an unknown physician and hospital, behave as though you were passing by, and secretly test the life and spiritual experience of all those living there. And when you begin to feel benefit from the doctors and nurses and get relief from your sicknesses, and especially with regard to your special disease, namely, spiritual pride, then go to them and buy it with the gold of humility, and write the contract on the parchment of obedience with the letters of service and with the angels as witnesses. And tear up and destroy in their presence the parchment of your own will. By going from place to place you get into the way of wasting the price with which Christ bought you. Let the monastery be your tomb before the tomb. For no one will come out of the grave until the general resurrection. And if some religious have left their tomb, see! They are dead. Let us implore the Lord that this may not happen to us.

95. When the senses find the orders heavy, the more lazy decide that they would prefer to devote themselves to prayer. But when they find they are ordered to do something easy they run from prayer as from fire.

96. Some undertake a particular duty, but for a brother's peace of mind, at his request they leave it; and some leave their work through laziness; and some do not leave it out of vainglory; and some do not leave it out of zeal.

97. If you have bound yourself by obligations and notice that your soul's eye is making no progress, do not get leave to quit. The genuine are genuine everywhere, and the reverse is equally true. In the world slander has caused many separations; but in communities greed produces all the falls and rejections. If you rule over your mistress (i.e. your stomach), every place of residence will give you dispassion; but if she rules over you, then outside the tomb you will be in danger everywhere.

98. The Lord who makes wise the blind<sup>2</sup> opens the eyes of the obedient to the virtues of their guide, and He blinds them to his defects. But the hater of good does the opposite.

99. Let us find in what is called quicksilver an image of perfect obedience. For with whatever material we roll it, it runs to the lowest place, and will mix with no defilement.

1 Cf. Job xiii, 1. 2 Psalm cxlv, 8.

100. Let the zealous be particularly attentive to themselves, lest by condemning the careless they themselves incur worse condemnation. And I think the reason why Lot was justified was because, though living among such people, he never seems to have condemned them.

101. At all times, but most of all during the singing in church, let us keep quiet and undistracted. For by distractions the demons aim to bring our prayer to nothing.

102. A servant of the Lord<sup>1</sup> is he who in body stands before men, but in mind knocks at heaven with prayer.

103. Insults, humiliations and similar things are like the bitterness of wormwood to the soul of a novice; while praises, honours and approbation are like honey and give birth to all manner of sweetness in pleasure-lovers. But let us look at the nature of each: wormwood purifies all interior filth, while honey increases gall.

104. Let us trust with firm confidence those who have taken upon themselves the care of us in the Lord, even though they order something apparently contrary and opposed to our salvation. For it is then that our faith in them is tested as in a furnace of humiliation. For it is a sign of the truest faith if we obey our superiors without any hesitation, even when we see the opposite of what we had hoped for happening.

105. From obedience comes humility, as we have already said earlier. From humility comes discernment as the great Cassian has said with beautiful and sublime philosophy in his chapter on discernment.<sup>2</sup> From discernment comes insight, and from insight comes foresight. And who would not follow this fair way of obedience, seeing such blessings in store for him? It was of this great virtue of obedience that the good Psalmist said: Thou hast in Thy goodness prepared for the poor<sup>3</sup> obedient soul, O God, Thy presence in his heart.

106. Throughout your life remember that great athlete who for eighteen whole years never heard with his outward ears his superior say the words, 'May you be saved,' but inwardly heard daily from the Lord, not merely, 'May you be saved' (which is an uncertain wish), but 'You are saved' (which is definite and sure).

107. Some living in obedience, on noticing the condescension and indulgence of the superior, ask his permission to follow their own desires. But let them know that when they obtain this they completely deprive themselves of the confessor's crown. For obedience is entirely foreign to hypocrisy and one's own will.

108. There was the man who received an order, but on seeing the intention of the person who gave it, namely that the fulfilment of the order would not give him pleasure, asked to be excused. And another saw this, but unhesitatingly obeyed. The question is: which of them acted more piously?

109. It is impossible that the devil should act contrary to his own will. Let those living an easy-going life, whether persevering in one solitary place or in a community, convince you of this. Let the temptation to retire from our place be a proof for us that our life there is pleasing to God. For being warred against is a sign that we are making war.

#### About Saint Acacius

110. I will not be silent about something which it is not right to leave in silence lest I should inhumanly keep to myself what ought to be made known. The famous John the Sabbaite told me things worth hearing. And that he was detached and above all falsehood, and free from words and deeds of

1 Lit. 'a deacon' or 'minister'.

2 . John Cassian, Conference 2. 3 Psalm lxxvii, 10.

evil, you know from your own experience, holy father. This man told me: 'In my monastery in Asia (for that is where the good man came from) there was a certain elder who was extremely careless and undisciplined. I say this without passing judgment on him, but simply to state the truth. He obtained, I do not know how, a disciple, a youth called Acacius, simple-hearted but prudent in thought. And he endured so much from this elder that to many people it will perhaps seem incredible. For the elder tormented him daily not only with insults and indignities, but even with blows. But his patience was not mere senseless endurance. And so, seeing him daily in wretched plight like the lowest slave, I would ask him when I met him: "What is the matter, Brother Acacius, how are you today?" And he would at once show me a black eye, or a scarred neck or head. But knowing that he was a worker, I would say to him: "Well done, well done; endure and it will be for your good." Having done nine years with this pitiless elder, he departed to the Lord. Five days after his burial in the cemetery of the fathers, Acacius's master went to a certain elder living there and said to him: "Father, Brother Acacius is dead." As soon as the elder heard this he said: "Believe me, elder, I do not believe it." The other replied: "Come and see." The elder at once rose and went to the cemetery with the master of the blessed ascetic. And he called as to a living person to him who was truly alive in his falling asleep, and said: "Are you dead, Brother Acacius?" And the good doer of obedience, showing his obedience even after his death, replied to the great elder: "How is it possible, Father, for a man who is a doer of obedience to die ?" Then the elder who had been Acacius's master became terrified and fell on his face in tears. Afterwards he asked the abbot of the Laura for a cell near the tomb, and lived in it devoutly, always saying to the fathers: "I have committed murder." And it seemed to me, Father John, that the one who spoke to the dead man was the great John himself. For that blessed soul told me another story as if it were about someone else, when it was really about himself, as I was afterwards able to learn for certain.'

#### About John the Sabbaite, or Antiochus

111. 'There was another,' said John, 'in the same monastery in Asia who became a disciple of a certain meek, gentle and quiet monk. And seeing that the elder honoured and cared for him, he rightly judged that this would be fatal for many men, and he begged the elder to send him away. (As the elder had another disciple, this would not cause him much inconvenience.) And so he went away, and with a letter from his

master he settled in a cenobitic monastery in Pontus. On the first night that he entered this monastery he saw in a dream his account being made out by someone, and after settling that awful account he was left a debtor to the sum of a hundred pounds of gold. When he woke up he began to reflect on what he had seen in his dream and said: "Poor Antiochus" (for this was his name), "you certainly fall far short of your debt!" "And when," he continued, 'I had lived in this monastery for three years in unquestioning obedience, and was regarded by all with contempt and was insulted as the stranger (for there was no other strange monk there), then again I saw in a dream someone giving me a credit-note for the payment of ten pounds of my debt. And so when I woke up and had thought about my dream, I said: "Still only ten! But when shall I pay the rest?" After that I said to myself: "Poor Antiochus! Still more toil and dishonour for you." From that time forward I began to pretend to be a blockhead, yet without in any way neglecting the service of all. But when the merciless fathers saw that I willingly served in that same condition, they gave me all the heavy work of the monastery. In such a way of life I spent thirteen years, when in a dream I saw those who had appeared to me before, and they gave me a receipt in complete settlement of my debt. So when the members of the monastery imposed upon me in any way, I remembered my debt and endured it courageously.' So you see, Father John, that wise John told me this as if it were about another person. And that was why he changed his name to Antiochus. But in actual fact it was he himself who so courageously destroyed the handwriting<sup>1</sup> by his patience and obedience.

1 Cf. Colossians ii, 24.

112. Let us hear what a gift of discernment this holy man obtained by his utter obedience. When he was residing in the monastery of St. Sabba three young monks came to him wanting to become his disciples. He gladly received them and at once gave them kindly hospitality, wanting to refresh them after the labour of their journey. When three days had passed, the elder said to them: 'By nature, brothers, I am prone to fornication, and I cannot accept any of you.' But they were not scandalized, for they knew the good work of the elder. Yet however much they asked him, they were quite unable to persuade him. Then they threw themselves at his feet and implored him at least to give them a rule-- how and where they ought to live. So he yielded to their entreaties, and knowing that they would receive it with humility and obedience, the elder said to one: 'The Lord wants you, child, to live in a place of solitude in subjection to a father.' And to the second he said: 'Go and sell your will and give it to God, and take up your cross and persevere in a community and monastery of brothers, and you will certainly have treasure in heaven.' Then to the third he said: 'Take in with your very breath the word of Him who said: "He who endures to the end will be saved."<sup>1</sup> Go, and if possible choose for your trainer in the Lord the most strict and exacting person and with daily perseverance drink abuse and scorn as milk and honey.' Then the brother said to the great John: 'But, Father, what if the trainer lives a lax life?' The elder replied: 'Even if you see him committing fornication, do not leave him, but say to yourself: "Friend, why are you here ?"<sup>2</sup> Then you will see all pride vanish from you, and lust wither.'

113. Let all of us who wish to fear the Lord struggle with our whole might, so that in the school of virtue we do not acquire for ourselves malice and vice, cunning and craftiness, curiosity and anger. For it does happen, and no wonder! As long as a man is a private individual, or a seaman, or a tiller of the soil, the King's enemies do not war so much against him. But when they see him taking the King's colours,<sup>3</sup> and the shield, and the dagger, and the sword, and the bow, and clad in soldier's garb, then they gnash at him with their teeth, and do all in their power to destroy him. And so, let us not slumber.

114. I have seen innocent and most beautiful children come to school for the sake of wisdom, education and profit, but through contact with the other pupils they learn there nothing but cunning and vice. The

intelligent will understand this.

115. It is impossible for those who learn a craft whole-heartedly not to make daily advance in it. But some know their progress, while others by divine providence are ignorant of it. A good banker never fails in the evening to reckon the day's profit or loss. But he cannot know this clearly unless he enters it every hour in his notebook. For the hourly account brings to light the daily account.

116. When a foolish person is accused or shouted at he is wounded by it and tries to contradict, or at once makes an apology to his accuser, not out of humility but in order to stop the accusations. But when you are being ridiculed, be silent, and receive with patience these spiritual cauterizations, or rather, purifying flames. And when the doctor has finished, then ask his forgiveness. For while he is angry perhaps he will not accept your apology.

117. While struggling against all the passions, let us who are in communities struggle every hour, especially against these two: greed of stomach and irritability. For in a community there is plenty of food for these passions.

118. The devil suggests to those living in obedience the desire for impossible virtues. Similarly, to those living in solitude he proposes unsuitable ideas. Scan the mind of inexperienced novices and there you will find distracted thought: a desire for quiet, for the strictest fast, for uninterrupted prayer, for absolute freedom from vanity, for unbroken remembrance of death, for continual compunction, for perfect freedom from anger, for deep silence, for surpassing purity. And if by divine providence they are without these to start with, they rush in vain to another life and are deceived. For the enemy urges

1 St. Matthew x, 22.

2 St. Matthew xxvi, 50.

3 Lit. 'seal'. In the Orthodox service of Confirmation each anointing is accompanied by the words 'The seal of

the gift of the Holy Spirit'. Cf. 2, Cor. i, 22.

them to seek these perfections prematurely, so that they may not persevere and attain them in due course. But to those living in solitude the deceiver extols hospitality, service, brotherly love, community life, visiting the sick. The devil's aim is to make the latter as impatient as the former.

119. Only a few (and it is true what I say) can live in solitude;<sup>1</sup> in fact, only those who have obtained divine consolation for encouragement in their labours and divine co-operation in their struggles.

120. Let us judge the nature of our passions and of our obedience, and choose our spiritual father accordingly. If you are prone to lust, then do not select as your trainer a wonderworker who is ready for everyone with a welcome and a meal, but rather an ascetic who will hear of no consolation in food. If you are haughty, then let him be stern and unyielding, and not meek and kindly. Let us not seek those who have the gift of foreknowledge and foresight, but rather those who are unquestionably humble and whose character and place of residence correspond to our maladies. And after the example of the above-mentioned righteous Abba Cyriacus, adopt this good habit so conducive to obedience, of always thinking that the Superior is trying you, and you will certainly never go wide of the mark. If your director constantly rebukes you and you thereby obtain great faith and love for him, then know that the Holy Spirit

has invisibly made His abode in your soul and the power of the Highest has overshadowed you.

121. But do not boast or rejoice when you bear insults and indignities courageously, but rather mourn that you have done something meriting your bad treatment and incensed the soul of your director against you. Do not be surprised at what I am going to say (for I have Moses to support me). It is better to sin against God than against our father; for when we anger God, our director can reconcile us; but when he is incensed against us, there is no one to propitiate him for us. But it seems to me that both cases amount to the same thing.

122. Let us look carefully and make our decision and keep alert as to when we ought to endure thankfully and silently accusations made to our pastor, and when we ought to reassure him. It seems to me that in all cases when indignity is offered to us we should be silent; for it is our moment of profit. But in those cases where another person is involved, we should put up a defence so as to maintain the link of love and peace unbroken.

123. Those who have jumped out of obedience will tell you of its value; for it was only then that they fully realized the heaven in which they had been living.

124. He who is running towards dispassion and God regards as a great loss any day in which he is not reviled. Just as trees swayed by the winds drive their roots deeply into the earth, so those who live in obedience get strong and unshakable souls.

125. He who has come to know his weakness by living in solitude, and has then changed his place and sold himself to obedience, has without trouble recovered his sight and seen Christ.

126. Keep at it, brother athletes, and I will say it again, keep running, as you hear Wisdom crying of you: As gold in the furnace, or rather, in a community, the Lord has tried them, and as a whole burnt offering has He received them into His bosom.<sup>2</sup> To Him belongs the glory and eternal dominion, with the eternal Father and with the Holy and adorable Spirit! Amen.

This step is equal in number to the Evangelists. Athlete, keep running fearlessly!<sup>3</sup>

1 Lit. 'silence'.

2 Wisdom iii, 6.

3 In some manuscripts there is dislocation here. The first sentence of Step 5 is sometimes placed here.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-john-climacus/step-4-on-blessed-and-ever-memorable-obedience-part-2/>

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