

Introduction to the Devout Life by St. Francis de Sales

Written over 400 years ago, the *Introduction to the Devout Life* is still one of the most popular books for those pursuing holiness. St. Francis de Sales explains how to turn that desire for sanctity into resolutions that yield grace-filled results.

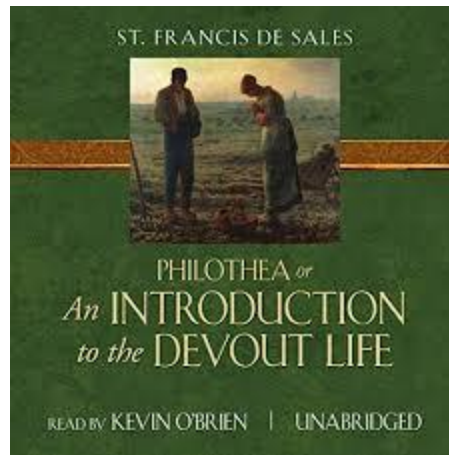
Themes include:

Pursuing a devout life whole-heartedly
Incorporating prayer and sacraments into a busy schedule
Growing in virtue
Battling wisely against temptation
Making spiritual progress through daily, monthly, and yearly exercises
Whether you are just beginning your spiritual journey or are more advanced in the spiritual life, you'll be able to apply this timeless wisdom immediately. Let St. Francis de Sales illumine the path to holiness and strengthen your desire to walk that road with the Lord.

St. Francis de Sales (1567–1622) was the Bishop of Geneva and a renowned spiritual director. Preaching during the Counter-Reformation, he is estimated to have converted 70,000 Calvinists in his lifetime. He was a fervent proponent of the universal call to holiness and spent much of his time guiding lay people on the road to sanctity. Declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius IX in 1877, St. Francis is still helping to form saints through his many writings, of which *Introduction to the Devout Life* is the most famous.

We'll study this book together over eleven sessions. I hope to see you there!

STUDY GUIDE



STUDY PLAN



<u>DATE</u>	<u>SECTION TO READ</u>
Class 1: April 18	Preface and Preface by Author
Class 2: April 25	Part I, pages 1-16
Class 3: May 2	Part I, first five meditations
Sunday, May 9	Mother's Day – no meeting
Class 4: May 16	Part I, meditations six through ten
Class 5: May 23	Part II, pages 47-67
Class 6: May 30	Part II, pages 68-84
Class 7: June 6	Part III, pages 85-138
Class 8: June 13	Part III, pages 139-186
Sunday, June 20	Father's Day – no meeting
Class 9: June 27	Part IV, pages 187-201
Sunday, July 4	Independence Day – no meeting
Class 10: July 11	Part IV, pages 202-222
Class 11: July 18	Part V, pages 223-242

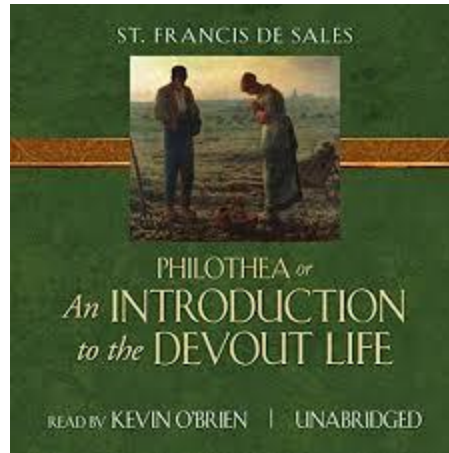
READ: Each week, there will be assigned reading.

RESPOND: Each week, there will be a few questions to which you will respond in the group discussion.

REMEMBER: Each week, there will be a list of items to remember from the reading and discussion.

All classes are on Sunday mornings at 9:30 in St. Mary's Hall.

STUDY GUIDE



WEEK ONE



READ: PREFACE AND PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR

RESPOND:

1. WHAT IS TRUE DEVOTION?
2. CAN ANYONE BE DEVOUT?
3. WHAT ARE YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PURIFICATIONS?

REMEMBER:

Place yourself in the Presence of God. Ask Him to inspire your heart.

A life of devotion to God should be active in your state of life.

Devotion is a gift from God - a grace - with which we cooperate.

Purification from mortal sin or attachment to sin prepares the soul for devotion.

Two great means of closer union with God

The Sacraments

Mental Prayer

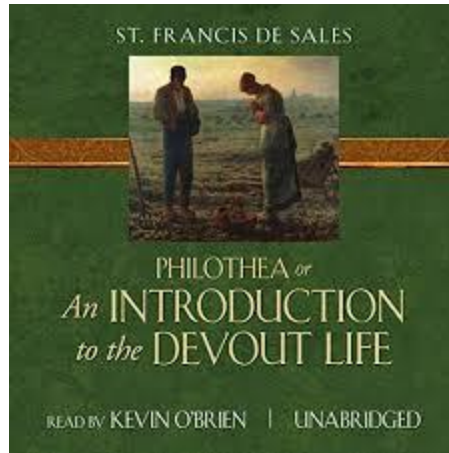
Practice the virtues

Gentleness, Temperance, Modesty, Humility, Charity, Patience

Guard against temptations

Compromising your commitment; sadness; anxiety; despair

STUDY GUIDE



WEEK TWO



READ: PART I, PAGES 1-16

RESPOND:

1. DO YOU RECOGNIZE YOURSELF IN ANY OF THE “DEVOUT” PEOPLE DESCRIBED ON PAGE 3?
2. WHAT IS YOUR IDEA OF LIVING A DEVOUT LIFE?
3. WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FLOWERS (GOOD DESIRES)?
4. WHAT ARE YOUR SINFUL INCLINATIONS TO PRUNE AWAY?

REMEMBER:

First you must love God and obey His commandments.

This love shining on our souls is called Grace.

Grace prompting our good works is called Charity.

Good works done carefully, diligently, and promptly is called Devotion.

Prayer and the sacraments are indispensable for a devout life.

Seek a Spiritual Director to guide your devotions.

The ascent to a devout life takes time and is accomplished by degrees.

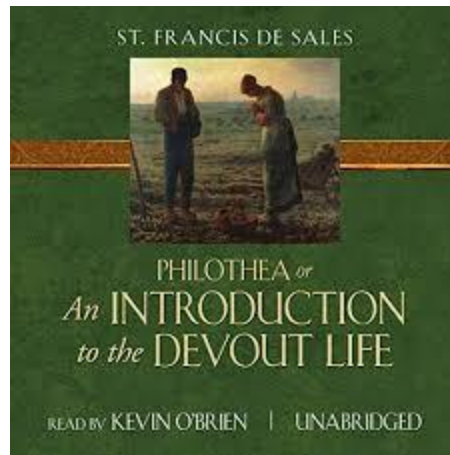
Be patient with yourself.

Kindle your heartfelt contrition for sins great and small.

Linger awhile to gather your spiritual bouquet

Revisit your spiritual bouquet throughout the day

STUDY GUIDE



WEEK THREE



READ: PART I, MEDITATIONS ONE THROUGH FIVE

RESPOND:

1. WHICH OF THESE MEDITATIONS PROVED MOST HELPFUL TO INCREASING YOUR DEVOTION TO GOD?
 - A. OF CREATION
 - B. OF THE END FOR WHICH WE WERE CREATED
 - C. OF THE GIFTS OF GOD
 - D. ON SIN
 - E. OF DEATH

REMEMBER:

Place yourself in the Presence of God.

Ask Him to inspire your heart.

Consider the meditation for the day.

Make your affections and resolutions for the day.

Conclude by:

Thanking God

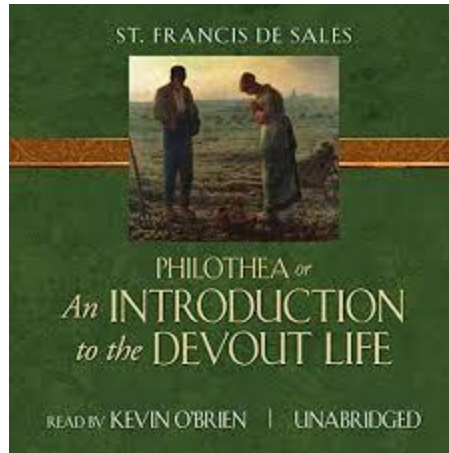
Make an offering to God

Prayer for the day

Linger awhile to gather your spiritual bouquet

Revisit your spiritual bouquet throughout the day

STUDY GUIDE



WEEK FOUR



READ: PART I, MEDITATIONS SIX THROUGH TEN

RESPOND:

1. WHICH OF THESE MEDITATIONS PROVED MOST HELPFUL TO INCREASING YOUR DEVOTION TO GOD?
 - A. ON JUDGMENT
 - B. OF HELL
 - C. ON PARADISE
 - D. ON THE CHOICES OPEN TO YOU
 - E. HOW THE SOUL CHOOSES THE DEVOUT LIFE

REMEMBER:

Place yourself in the Presence of God.

Ask Him to inspire your heart.

Consider the meditation for the day.

Make your affections and resolutions ("the choice") for the day.

Conclude by:

Thanking God

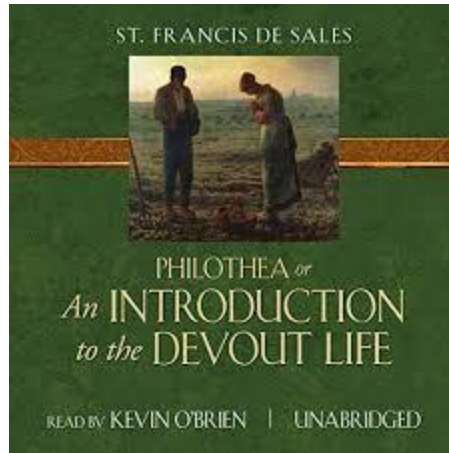
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Prayer for the day

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WEEK FIVE



READ: PART II, PAGES 47-67

RESPOND:

1. HAVE THESE INSTRUCTIONS ON PRAYER HELPED YOU TO BE PARTICULARLY AWARE OF GOD'S PRESENCE?
2. ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA ALSO ENCOURAGED THE USE OF IMAGINATION FOR MENTAL PRAYER. DON'T LET YOUR IMAGINATION RUN AWAY FROM YOU, THOUGH!

REMEMBER:

Place yourself in the Presence of God.

Ask Him to inspire your heart.

Consider the meditation for the day.

Make your affections and resolutions ("the choice") for the day.

Conclude by:

Thanking God

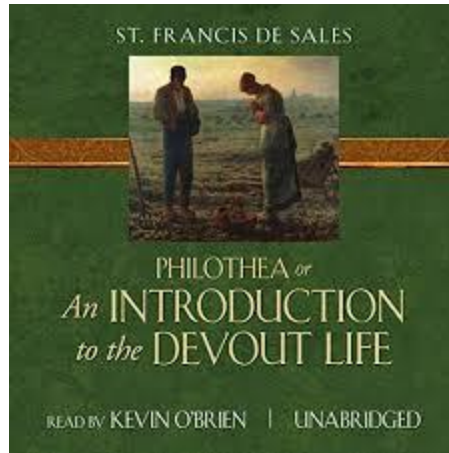
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WEEK SIX



READ: PART II, PAGES 68-84

RESPOND:

1. THE EUCHARIST: CENTER POINT OF PRAYER, HEART OF ALL DEVOTION, SOUL OF PIETY, HAS UNTOLD POWER.
2. RECEIVE THE EUCHARIST DEVOUTLY AND FREQUENTLY. ALLOW HIS PRESENCE TO KINDLE YOUR HEART AND NOURISH YOUR SOUL.
3. BE KEENLY AWARE THAT YOU RECEIVE THE BODY, BLOOD, SOUL, AND DIVINITY OF THE RISEN AND GLORIFIED LORD JESUS.

REMEMBER:

Place yourself in the Presence of God.

Ask Him to inspire your heart.

Consider the meditation for the day.

Make your affections and resolutions ("the choice") for the day.

Conclude by:

Thanking God

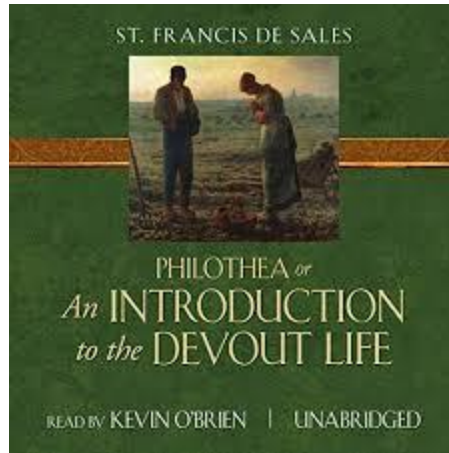
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WEEK SEVEN



READ: PART III, PAGES 85-138

RESPOND:

1. CHARITY IS PATIENT, KIND, GENTLE, TEMPERATE, MODEST, AND HUMBLE. DO YOU AGREE WITH SOME OR ALL OF THESE?
2. ARE YOU GROWING IN VIRTUE AND DEVOTION?
3. VIRTUES TO CULTIVATE: CHEERFULNESS, SELF-MORTIFICATION, OBEDIENCE, POVERTY OF SPIRIT, CHASTITY, FORBEARANCE, AND HOLY FERVOR.
4. CHOOSE A VIRTUE OPPOSITE TO A VICE WHICH TEMPTS YOU, AND CONSCIOUSLY EXERCISE THAT VIRTUE.

REMEMBER:

Place yourself in the Presence of God.

Ask Him to inspire your heart.

Consider the meditation for the day.

Make your affections and resolutions ("the choice") for the day.

Conclude by:

Thanking God

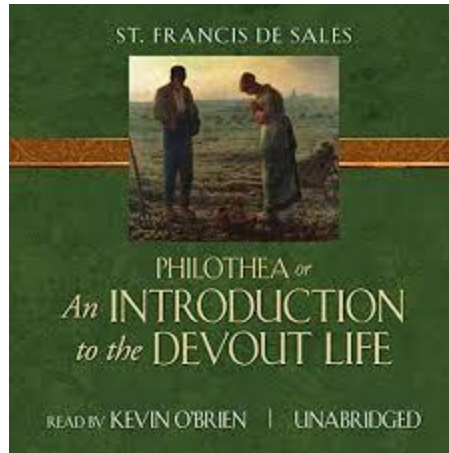
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WEEK EIGHT



READ: PART III, PAGES 139–186

RESPOND:

1. WHEN JESUS DWELLS IN OUR HEARTS, HE LIVES IN OUR ACTIONS.
2. EFFECTS OF FASTING:
 - A. RAISES OUR MIND TO GOD AND AWAY FROM OURSELVES
 - B. SUBDUES THE FLESH TO OBTAIN A HEAVENLY REWARD
 - C. CONTROLS GREEDINESS, ENCOURAGES GENEROSITY
 - D. KEEPS OUR APPETITES SUBJECT TO THE HOLY SPIRIT
3. MODESTY IN DRESS AND IN SPEECH IS IMPORTANT. SLANDER IS A KIND OF MURDER AND STRIPS OTHERS OF THEIR DIGNITY.
4. GREAT OCCASIONS FOR SERVING GOD COME SELDOM, BUT LITTLE ONES SURROUND US DAILY.

REMEMBER:

Place yourself in the Presence of God.

Ask Him to inspire your heart.

Consider the meditation for the day.

Make your affections and resolutions ("the choice") for the day.

Conclude by:

Thanking God

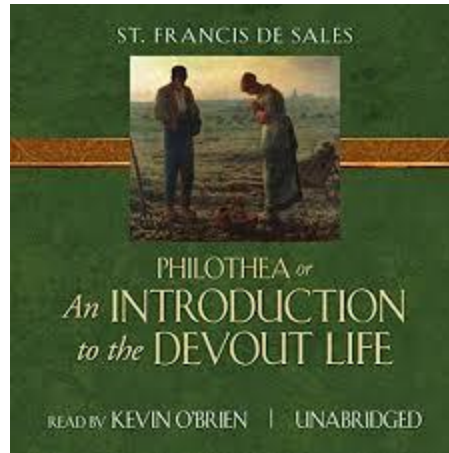
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WEEK NINE



READ: PART IV, PAGES 187-201

RESPOND:

1. COURAGE IS NEEDED TO PERSEVERE IN YOUR DELIBERATE CHOICE OF A DEVOUT LIFE. WHY?
2. STAGES OF TEMPTATION:
 - A. SINS ARE SUGGESTED TO THE SOUL (TEMPTATION)
 - B. YOU ACCEPT OR DWELL UPON THE ENTICEMENT (DELECTATION)
 - C. YOU ACT UPON THE EVIL (CONSENT)
 - D. AT ANY POINT, YOU CAN REJECT THE TEMPTATION.
 - E. YOU CAN SUFFER TEMPTATION BUT CAN RESIST IT. THE TEMPTATION ITSELF IS NOT A SIN, BUT DELECTATION AND CONSENT ARE SINS.
3. REMEDIES FOR RESISTING TEMPTATION: KEEP YOUR EYES AND HEART FIXED ON GOD; PRAY FOR HIS HELP; CULTIVATE PEACE IN YOUR HEART.

REMEMBER:

Place yourself in the Presence of God.

Ask Him to inspire your heart.

Consider the meditation for the day.

Make your affections and resolutions ("the choice") for the day.

Conclude by:

Thanking God

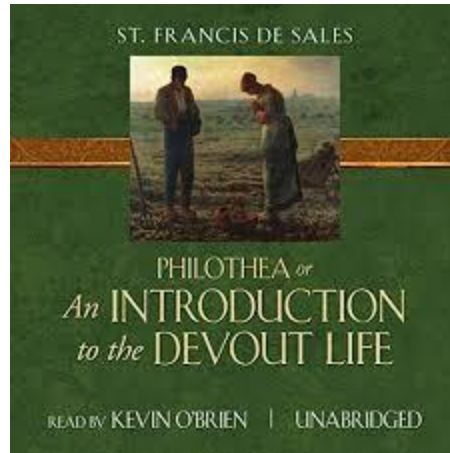
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WEEK TEN



READ: PART IV, PAGES 202–222

RESPOND:

1. WORLDLY CARES CAN DISTRACT US FROM DEVOTION TO GOD. PRAY AND CONSULT YOUR CONFESSOR. KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE CRUCIFIED.
2. CONSOLATIONS ARE SOMETIMES GIVEN IN PRAYER.
 - A. TRUE, SOLID DEVOTION REMAINS HUMBLE AND PREPARED TO DO GOD'S WILL IN ALL THINGS.
 - B. SPIRITUAL SWEETNESS CONSOLES US, BUT KEEP YOUR HEART ON THE CONSOLER, THE ONE BESTOWING THE GIFT.
3. DRYNESS IN PRAYER, OR THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL
 - A. WHEN GOD WITHDRAWS HIS CONSOLATIONS, CLING FIRMLY TO HIM.
 - B. IN HUMILITY, PRAISE THE GIVER OF ALL GIFTS.
 - C. IN THE DARKNESS, SEEK HIS LIGHT. UNITE YOUR CROSS TO HIS.

REMEMBER:

Place yourself in the Presence of God.

Ask Him to inspire your heart.

Consider the meditation for the day.

Make your affections and resolutions ("the choice") for the day.

Conclude by:

Thanking God

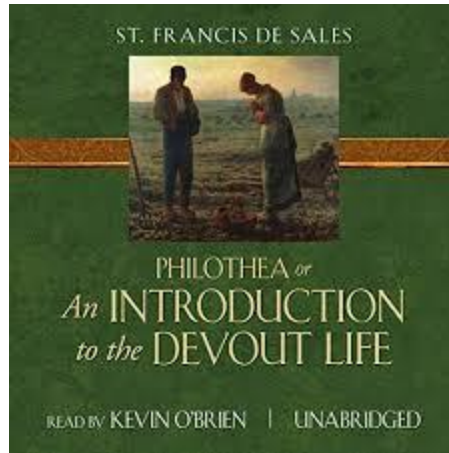
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WEEK ELEVEN



READ: PART V, PAGES 223–242

RESPOND:

1. REGULARLY RENEW YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE DEVOUT LIFE.
2. HUMILITY AND GRATITUDE UNDERPIN THIS DEVOTION.
 - A. CONSIDER THE BENEFITS OF DEVOTION.
 - B. REGULARLY EXAMINE YOUR PROGRESS IN THE DEVOUT LIFE.
 - C. REFLECT UPON SCRIPTURE, NATURE, DEVOTIONS, AND EVERYTHING GOOD, TRUE, AND BEAUTIFUL TO INSPIRE GREATER LOVE OF GOD.
3. OPENLY PROFESS YOUR DESIRE TO BE DEVOUT
 - A. OPENLY PROFESS YOUR DESIRE TO BE DEVOUT.
 - B. STEADFASTLY PERSEVERE IN PURSUING VIRTUE AND HOLINESS.
4. IF THIS IS THE *INTRODUCTION* TO A DEVOUT LIFE, CAN YOU IMAGINE THE ADVANCED COURSE OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES?

REMEMBER:

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Ask Him to inspire your heart.

Consider the meditation for the day.

Make your affections and resolutions ("the choice") for the day.

Conclude by:

Thanking God

Make an offering to God

Prayer for the day

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