
DISCUSSION QUOTES

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF COLORADO CLERGY GATHERING

Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica, *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives*

Our life depends on the kind of thoughts we nurture. If our thoughts are peaceful, calm, meek, and kind, then that is what our life is like. If our attention is turned to the circumstances in which we live, we are drawn into a whirlpool of thoughts and can have neither peace nor tranquility.

Elder Thaddeus was a Russian Orthodox was a much sought after monk and sage who lived in Yugoslavia, and then Serbia, prior to his death in the early 2000s.

Jeffery Olsen, *Knowing*

When hope and faith have waned, and only despair remains, we are perhaps in our most beautiful state. It is in this space that complete trust arises, and a willingness to accept what is, and be honest about it...

I used to believe God was testing me in some way and wanted me to prove my faith somehow. I have come to a deeper truth; God isn't testing me at all. God knows me perfectly. It was *me* who didn't know myself. We come from perfect love, and we will return to it someday, but for now, we love imperfectly, beautifully flawed in this lower dimension. Yet our skinned knees and scraped palms are not signs of shame, but rather badges of courage for having come to play the game. We are beautiful in our brokenness and perfect in chaos regardless of the judgments we may put on it. Each moment is sacred. Each moment is a gift. Life is not a test. It is a gift.

Every little thing is of the light, there is divine order in every single experience and every soul who crosses my path... Being open to that divine gift in each moment is what brings life profound meaning.

Jeffery Olsen is a spiritual writer who wrote about recovering his life after a horrific accident that killed his wife and baby son, and that inspired him to seek a life of deeper meaning and purpose.



Discussion Questions:

- What kind of thoughts do we nurture—those that emerge from the whirlpool of life or those that lead to a sense of peace and tranquility?
- What keeps us from seeing life as a gift rather than a test?
- How can we lead the church to be a place that is of the light, and the nurtures people to see life as a gift?