

*St. John Climacus' Ladder of
Divine Ascent*

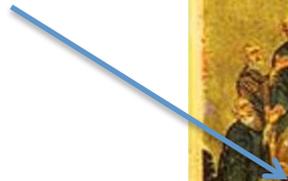


Step 3 (Exile) &
Step 4 (Obedience)

We've already slipped down ...



You are now here





Once detached ...

- The mind, body, and soul are ready for exile from the world. But exile is a stronger form of detachment and requires a greater will and determination

“Detachment is excellent; but her mother is exile. Having become an exile for the Lord’s sake, we should have no ties of affection at all lest we seem to be roving in order to gratify our passions.”



Exile is sacrifice

- We must leave the world willingly but not joyfully
 - “It is not from hatred that we separate ourselves from our own people or places (God forbid!), but to avoid the harm which might come to us from them.”



Exile is not denouncement

- We must be careful not to let our hatred of the world fuel a feeling of superiority in our exile
- But rather let our love for God be the sole purpose of our exile



Exile is humble

- Just like other spiritual endeavors, we must not think too much of our achievement, or else the achievement may be lost. Vanity will “take us down a rung.”

“And if we possess the gift of eloquence and some shreds of knowledge, the thought occurs to us that we could be saviors of souls and teachers in the world—that we may waste in the sea what we have gathered so well in the harbor.”



Exile is love

- Love of God
- Love for others
 - But not love of this world
 - Or love of life
 - Or love of anything above God



Obedience is sacrifice

- “Absolute renunciation of our own life, clearly expressed in our bodily actions.”
- “The tomb of the will and the resurrection of humility”
- “Fearlessness of death”
- “Distrust of oneself in everything, however good it may be, right up to the end of one’s life.”
- Unquestioning reliance upon our spiritual leaders rather than ourselves



Obedience is humble

- Obedience is a practice that requires and increases humility
- Humility leads to dispassion



Obedience is love

- Absence of pride
- Relinquishing of control
- Giving completely to others



Whoa Dude. I'm not a monk ...

- At least exile your mind from the world if not your body
- Give up an attachment to at least one worldly possession
- Practice obedience in your work, family, or volunteerism; become the person at the “back of the room.”

How I Feel Most Days ...

