

Elder Paisios on Spiritual Study

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— Geronda, what books should be read by those who are beginning their spiritual search?

— First, they should read the New Testament to learn the meaning of Christ, to be shaken up a little; later they can read the Old Testament. Do you know how hard it is when they have read nothing and yet they come to ask for help? It is like an elementary school child going to a university professor and saying, “Help me.” What can the professor tell him? “One plus one equals two”? Others, again, are not spiritually restless; they come and say, “Father, I have no problems and I am just fine; I only dropped by to see you.” Man can never say that he has no problems, no concerns; he will have something. The struggle for the spiritual life never ends. Or some people come and tell me, “Tell us spiritual things.” It is as if they went to the grocery store and said, “Give us some groceries.” The grocer is at a loss and needs to know what they need. They need to say, “I want so much sugar, so much rice,

and so on, but they only say, 'Give us groceries.' "It is like going to the pharmacy and saying, "Give us medicines," without first saying what their illness is, or whether or not they went to the doctor, and what he advised them to do. Go figure! You see, whoever is seriously concerned over his spiritual condition knows, more or less, what he is lacking, and once he seeks it, he benefits.

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