

Let us take care of ourselves!

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Patristic reading

Let us take care then, brethren. Let us be vigilant while we have time. Why do we neglect ourselves?

Let us take care then, brethren. Let us be vigilant while we have time. Why do we neglect ourselves? Let us do something good, so that we may find help in time of temptation! Why do we waste our lives? We hear so many things but we do not care and are disdainful. We see our brothers carried off from our midst but we are not vigilant, in spite of the fact that we know that we are approaching death little by little. Look! From the time that we sat down to talk up to now we have wasted two or three hours of our time and we are that much closer to death. Despite the fact that we know we are wasting our time, we are not afraid. Why do we not recall the saying of that elder who said: "If a person loses gold or silver he can find some more, but the person that loses time cannot find some more". Indeed, if we ask for one hour of our time we will not get it back. How many people there are who want to hear the word of God and cannot? Yet, we who hear so much are scornful and not aroused by it. God knows how worried I am about the insensibility of our souls, since we can be saved and we do not want to be. We can be inasmuch as we cut out the passions, whilst they are young but we do not care and we leave them to become hardened against us so that they grow to their greatest strength. As I have often told you, it is one thing to root out a herb, as it is easily dug out, and quite another to root out a great tree!

Dorotheos of Gaza, *Practical Teaching on the Christian Life XI*, 114