

READING AND DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

A Testament of Devotion

by

Thomas R. Kelly

1. Thomas R. Kelly explores the notion of living in Light. He writes, “You who read these words already know this inner Life and Light. For by this very Light within you, is your recognition given” (p. 4). What has been your experience of “knowing” this inner Light? How has it illuminated your “recognition” of God’s movements in your life?
2. Kelly addresses the necessity of ordering our mental lives and outlines two levels at which to accomplish this: through external everyday affairs and through internal reception to the divine (pp. 9–10). He calls the relationship between these a “fruitful interplay.” How do you attend to the urgencies of daily life while

remaining engaged and receptive to the divine? How does this fruitful interplay show itself in your life?

3. “Theologies and symbols and creeds, though inevitable, are transient and become obsolescent, while the Life of God sweeps through the souls of men in continued revelation and creative newness” (p. 11). Should we do away with creeds and theologies? Does God’s revelation change?
4. The guidance of life by Light creates a paradox, or mixing of two realities that seem inherently contradictory. Kelly refers to this as *contemptus mundi* (contempt for the world) and *amor mundi* (love for the world) (p. 19). How can loving the world and hating the world both be true at once? Have you experienced this kind of inexplicable contradiction in your life? In what way?
5. Holy Obedience is an alien concept in much of contemporary spirituality (p. 25). Why do you think Kelly believes Holy Obedience is a necessary discipline for living the life of Light?
6. Kelly asserts that many who claim to live in obedience follow only “half way” (pp. 26–27). How can good religious people be halfhearted about Holy Obedience? Where do you see yourself in this spectrum?
7. Kelly highlights four elements necessary to attain Holy Obedience. Let’s examine them in turn. The first is capturing a “flaming vision of the wonder of such a life” (p. 32). Is there a spiritual discipline you can practice to realize this? What might it look like?

8. The second element is to “begin where you are” and be as obedient as you can be in that very minute (p. 33). What might that look like at your dinner table at home or lunch break at work?
9. The third is, if you “stumble and forget God for an hour . . . don’t spend too much time in anguished regrets” (p. 34). Has there been a time when you have forgotten God for an hour? Did you feel regret? How long did your regret last?
10. The fourth element is to live in the “passive voice” (p. 34). Kelly asserts that we must stop actively trying to attain what *we* deem important and instead wait upon God, responding to his guidance. Do you consider yourself an active doer or a passive waiter when it comes to God’s movements in your life? Do you agree with the notion of living in the passive voice? Finally, is it possible to be obedient if you observe only three of the four elements? Why or why not?
11. “There is something about deepest humility that makes us bold,” Kelly writes (p. 36). Isn’t humility usually associated with meekness? In what way does it embolden? Have you ever found yourself emboldened by humility?
12. When speaking about the Blessed Community, Kelly writes, “Some of the most active church leaders, well-known for their executive efficiency, people we have always admired, are shown in the X-ray light of Eternity, to be agitated, half-committed, wistful, self-placating seekers, to whom the poise and serenity of

the Everlasting have never come” (p. 53). In light of your own experience with church leaders, do you agree with Kelly’s statement? How is one to measure the interior life of a church leader against the “X-ray light of Eternity”?

13. Blessed fellowship is “deeper than democracy. . . . It is a theocracy wherein God rules and guides and directs His listening children” (p. 58). Is such a lofty ideal attainable in this world?
14. Kelly asserts that part of living the life of Light means reordering inner thoughts and attitudes so that one can be *holy* and *busy* at the same time (p. 97). How is this realized in your life? If it isn’t, what can you change to make it so?
15. Obstacles to holy living include “lack of enthusiastic delight [and] deep, deep drawing love directed toward Him at every hour of the day and night” (p. 97). Does this suggest that if delight and deep love are absent, one cannot attain a blessed life of Light? Is it possible to *desire* these elements, even when God feels distant?
16. Kelly concludes that the ultimate means of recalibrating our spiritual lives is to take hold of an inner “holy Center” (p. 98). What does this mean to you? Have you experienced this? How has it helped you? If you haven’t experienced it, what may be distracting you, and how could you move toward this recalibration?