

The Instruction of Vladimir Monomakh (Part II) **(James W. Lillie)**

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



Above all else, don't forget the poor, but support them to the extent of your power. Give to the orphan, protect the widow, and don't let the mighty destroy another person. Don't take the life of the just or the unjust, nor order such a deed. Destroy no Christian soul even if they're subject to death. When you speak either good or evil, don't swear by the name of God, nor cross yourselves, because it's unnecessary.

Whenever you kiss the Cross to confirm an oath made to your brethren or to any other man, first test your heart as to whether you can abide by your word, then kiss the Cross, and after once having given your oath, abide by it, lest you destroy your souls by recanting. Receive with affection the blessing of bishops, priests, and abbots, and don't shun them, but rather, according to your means, love and help them, so that you may receive from them their intercession in the presence of God. Above all else, have no pride in your hearts and minds, but say, 'We're merely mortal; today we live and tomorrow we'll be in the grave. Everything You've given us isn't ours, but Yours, and You've done no more than lend it to us for a few days'. Don't hoard treasures upon the earth, because that's a great sin. Honour the elderly as your parents and the young as your siblings. Don't be lax in running your homes, but see to everything yourselves.



Source: ru.russianhistory.wikia.com/

Don't rely on your steward or your servant, lest they who come to visit ridicule your house or your table. When you set out to war, don't be inactive, don't rely on your captains, nor waste your time drinking, eating or sleeping. Set the sentries yourselves, and take your rest only after you've posted them at night at every important point about your troops. Rest, but rise early. Don't take off your accoutrements without a quick glance about you, because many a man's perished in a trice through such carelessness. Guard against lying, drunkenness and vice, because the soul and body perish through them.

When you travel anywhere by road through your lands, don't allow your followers or the entourage of anyone else to do violence to the villages or the dwellings, lest people revile you. Wherever you go, as often as you halt, give food and drink to the [? corrupted text]. Furthermore, honour guests, wherever they come from, if not with a gift, at least with food and drink, whether they're simple folk, or noble, or

emissaries, because travellers give a man a universal reputation as generous or mean. Visit the sick, and accompany the dead, since we're all mortal. Don't pass people by without a greeting; give them a kindly word. Love your wives, but don't give them any power over you. This is the end of all things: to hold the fear of God above all else.

If you forget all my admonitions, read this counsel frequently. Then I will be without disgrace, and it'll be good for you.

Don't forget the useful knowledge you possess, and acquire what you're not acquainted with, as my father did: even though he remained at home in his own country, he still knew five languages. In this way he acquired honour in those lands. Laziness is the mother of all evil. What [lazy] people know, they forget, and what they don't know, they don't learn. In practicing good works, you can't neglect any aspect of good conduct. And, above all, go to church. Don't let the rising sun find you in bed. This was my father's wont, and it's also the custom of all good and perfect men.

After giving praise to God at Mattins, as you look upon the rising sun, direct your praise to God with gladness again, and say: 'You have lightened my eyes, Christ my God, You have given me Your bright light. Grant me increase, Lord, in the years to come, so that, as I repent my sins and order my life righteously, I may so continue to praise God'. Then sit and confer with your retainers, or render justice to the people, or ride out for hunting or for pleasure, or else lie down to sleep. Sleep is established by God for noonday repose, since birds and beasts and men then rest from any labour.

[There follows a long list of his campaigns, the dangers he underwent and the wounds he suffered from men and beasts.]

May my sons or whoever else reads this document not criticize me. I'm not commending my own boldness, but praising God and glorifying His memory, because He's guarded me, a sinful and wretched man, for so many years, through all these vicissitudes, and didn't render me inactive or useless for any necessary human effort. As you read this document, prepare yourselves for good works, and glorify God in His saints. Without fear of death, of war, or of wild beasts, do a man's work, my sons, as God sets it before you. If I suffered no harm from war, from wild beasts, from flood, or from falling from my horse, then surely no one can harm you and destroy you, unless that, too, be ordained by God. But if death comes from God, then neither father, nor mother, nor brethren can hinder it, and while it's good to be on your guard, the protection of God is more effective than that of other

people.