

# How your spiritual life is like an old-fashioned clock

*St. Francis de Sales provides a very illuminating illustration of the spiritual life, comparing it to the functions of an old-fashioned clock.*

Sometimes we can be "content" with the state of our spiritual lives and not think that we need any improvement.

While we may think we do not need improvement, the reality is likely the exact opposite.

One helpful way to imagine our spiritual lives can be found in St. Francis de Sales' [Introduction to the Devout Life](#).

An old-fashioned clock

St. Francis de Sales first explains the mechanics of a good old-fashioned clock:

There is no clock, however good, but must be continually wound up; and moreover, during the course of each year it will need taking to pieces, to cleanse away the rust which clogs it, to straighten bent works, and renew such as are worn.

He is speaking about the classic wind-up clocks, not run by any batteries, but simply through the movement of many gears.

St. Francis de Sales then compares it to the spiritual life, describing how we all need to wind-up our devotion to God each day:

Even so, anyone who really cares for his heart's devotion will wind it up to God night and morning, and examine into its condition, correcting and improving it;

Furthermore, he also points out how we need to get the "rust" off our soul through the sacraments:

[A]nd at least once a year he will take the works to pieces and examine them carefully;—I mean his affections and passions,—so as to repair whatever may be amiss. And just as the clockmaker applies a delicate oil to all the wheels and springs of a clock, so that it may work properly and be less liable to rust, so the devout soul, after thus taking the works of his heart to pieces, will lubricate them with the Sacraments of Confession and the Eucharist.

**Our spiritual lives are in constant need of maintenance. When we stop progressing toward God, our spiritual "gears" will get rusted and stop in place.**

**The good news is that God has given us the sacraments to get our gears going again and to prevent us from slowing down.**

**The Church requires, at a minimum, to go to confession once a year, typically during the Lenten season. Yet, this is only the minimum and if we truly want our spiritual lives to be running smoothly, we need the "oil" of confession to keep us going.**

**Whatever you do, don't remain stationary in your spiritual life and always move forward, being drawn ever deeper into the Heart of God.**