Cato's Monostichs

Incipiant dicta Marci Catonis ad filium suum.
Cum anima adverterem quam plurimos graviter in via morum errare, succurrendum opinioni eorum et consulendum famae existimavi, maxime ut gloriose viverent et honorem contingerent. Nunc te, fili carissime, docebo, quo pacto morem animi tui componas. Igitur praecepta mea ita legito, ut intellegas; legere enim et non intelligere neglegere est.

1. Itaque deo supplica.
2. Parentes ama.
3. Cognatos cole.
5. Datum serva.
6. Foro parce.
7. Cum bonis ambula.
8. Antequam voceris, ne accesseris.
10. Saluta libenter.
11. Maiori concede; minori parce.
12. Rem tuam custodi.
13. Verecundiam serva.
15. Libros lege; quae legeris, memento.
16. Familiam cura.
17. Blandus esto.
18. Irascere ob rem gravem.
22. In iudicio adesto.

Here begin Marcus Cato's sayings to his son. Since I noticed that almost everyone makes serious mistakes when it comes to matters of character, I felt obliged to offer some correction for these ways of thinking and to show some concern for their reputations, above all so that they might live impressive lives and attain respectability. Now, dearest son, I will teach you how to form your character well. So read my instructions in such a way as to understand them; for to read and to miss the point amounts to "mis-reading" [neglecting].

1. And so make a humble prayer to God.
2. Have affection for your parents.
3. Treat your relatives well.
4. Revere your teacher.
5. Hold on to what has been given to you.
6. Do not spend much time out in public.
7. Associate with those who are respectable.
8. Do not go before you are called.
10. Greet people gladly.
11. Give in to those who are older than you are; go easy on those who are younger.
12. Watch over what belongs to you.
15. Read books; keep in mind what you have read.
16. Take care of your own.
17. Be pleasant.
18. Get angry [only] for a good reason.
19. Do not ridicule anyone.
20. [Be willing to] lend.
21. Pay attention to the one to whom you are giving.
22. [Be ready to] give support [to someone] in court.
23. Support your leadership.
25. Get an adequate amount of sleep.
26. Keep your solemn word.
27. Drink moderately.
28. Fight for your country.
29. Do not be too quick to believe.
30. Give safe advice.
31. Keep away from prostitutes.
32. Get an education.
33. Don't lie at all.
34. Do good to the good.
35. Do not use abusive speech.
36. Stick to your own assessment.
37. Decide what is fair.
38. Win over your parents with patience.
39. Do not forget a favor that you have received.
40. Do not ridicule a person suffering a misfortune.
41. Be very good at what you do.
42. Put your strengths to good use.
43. Control your rage.
44. Play with the hoop; avoid gambling.
45. Do not give any weight to a judgment of how strong someone is.
46. Do not scorn a younger person.
47. Do not itch for what belongs to someone else.
48. Have affection for your spouse. Train your children.
49. Follow the rules that you yourself have made.
50. Say little at a party.
51. Be eager to do what is right.
52. Be glad to have feelings of affection.
53. Hardly ever pass judgment.