

Reflection Questions for
OF LIFE AND SALVATION:
Reflections on Living the Christian Life
Based on the Fourteen Scripture Readings of
the Sacrament of Unction

By Fr. Stanley S. Harakas

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The following set of reflection questions were developed by Presbytera Helene Hall in the Spring of 1997 for the St. Macrina Study Group / Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church / Akron, Ohio.

St. Macrina's meets weekly during the school year to learn more about the Orthodox faith. Various texts and taped lectures have been used, including

1. Partakers of Divine Nature by Archimandrite Christoforos Stavropoulos & translated by Fr. Dr. Stanley Harakas.
2. Raising Them Right by Theofan the Recluse.
3. Way of the Ascetics by Tito Colliander.
4. Videotape of Fr. Thomas Hopko: "God's People at Work - Being Christian in the Modern World".
5. A Year of the Lord [5 volumes] Bible Study by Fr. Ted Stylianopoulos.
6. Beginning to Pray by Archbishop Anthony Bloom.
7. Victory in the Unseen Warfare by Jack Sparks

OF LIFE & SALVATION Reflection Questions
Session 1: Preliminary Reflections 1,2,3
"Obedience / Simplicity"

1. **Living the Whole Faith, Luke 13:22-30**
On which side of the 3-sided pyramid do I want to concentrate as we approach the opening of this study (if this study is during Lent, replace with "of the Triodion"): Sacramental, Personal Relationship with Christ, Living Righteously? [p.7] List some ways to carry this out.

2. **Living in the World, the 16th Chapter of the Gospel of John**
The struggles are before us as we seek to live in the world as Christians. Which struggle seems the most acute to me at this time: Opposition; Loneliness; Persecution, Sorrow, Evil, Other? [pp.12-13]

3. **Communing with the Source of Life, Three Biblical Passages**
Of the three Scripture passages at the beginning, which is the most inspiring to me? How has this affected my understanding of the holy Eucharist? [p.16]

OF LIFE & SALVATION Reflection Questions
Session 2: First Epistle & Gospel

1. **Is Any among You Sick? James 5:14-16**
How is prayer for others preventive medicine for us? [p.27] Give an example.

2. Is there a particular Saint to whom you pray to intercede for your family during illness? [p.27] Who is it?

3. From John 5:5: "Do you want to be healed." Which of the five points listed on page 28 have I used? Which do I need to use more often?

4. **Justifying Ourselves, Luke 10:25-37**
For Reflection Only: Think of a recent example when I have heard words of guidance and correction that threatened my ego. How did I respond?

OF LIFE & SALVATION: Reflection Questions
Session 3: Second Epistle & Gospel

1. **Maintaining Unity among Christians, Romans 15:1-6**
In what way can I strive for harmony among my brothers and sisters in the Faith?
[p.36]

2. **What Happens When a Sinner Meets Christ: Luke 19:1-10**
After reading the account of Zaccheus, in what aspect of my life do I recognize that Christ is calling to me? [p.39]

3. Study the four points on page 42. Which phrase is most meaningful to me?

4. For Reflection Only: Think of an example when I judged someone and then realized I was wrong. [pp.39-40]

OF LIFE & SALVATION: Reflection Questions
Session 4: Third Epistle: Reflections 1,2,3

1. **A More Excellent Way, 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:8**
Which single verse of I Corinthians 12:27-13:8 would I want someone to read when embarking on a new role in the Church? [p.43]

2. **Love: What It Isn't, 1 Corinthians 13:1-6**
List the negative characteristics that define what love is not. Which one do I need to work on improving? [p.50]

3. **Love: What It Does, 1 Corinthians 13:4-13**
Choose from the list of actions that characterize love and give an example of how I have witnessed love this week. [p.53]

4. "...our accomplishments...are more or less distortions of the truth." Explain. [p.54]

OF LIFE & SALVATION: Reflection Questions
Session 5: Third Gospel, Reflections 1,2,3

1. **Apostolic Living - 1: Empowered Disciples, Matthew 10:1-8**
What does it mean to live apostolicity?

2. **Apostolic Living - 2: Apostles to Our Own, Matthew 10:1-8**
Is there a way I can reach a "lost sheep"? With which of the following am I most comfortable?
 - Christian "welcome"
 - sharing time outside of church hours
 - sharing talent outside church hours
 - inviting them to attend a church activity
 - other

3. **Apostolic Living - 3: Apostolic Work, Matthew 10:1-8**
What is the main message of the Gospel message on page 68? How does Christ expect us to carry out this message?

4. Think of a modern-day apostle who is a role model to me. Explain. What are his/her special attributes?

OF LIFE & SALVATION: Reflection Questions
Session 6: Fourth Epistle & Gospel, Reflections 1,2,3

1. **Do What You Are - 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1**
Complete the sentence: Since I am a "temple of the living God," I need to give up.....
[pp.76-77]

2. **Never Without Help, Matthew 8:14-17**
What are the four lessons for us this gospel? [pp,81-81]

3. We are encouraged to "lend to God the mercy of which we stand in need of ourselves." [p.82] Give an example of when mercy has been bestowed upon another or me.

4. **What It Takes To Be a Follower of Christ, Matthew 8:18-22**
The scribe wanted to follow Christ only on his own terms. Have I fallen short in this area? What are my terms?

5. **The "Why" of Following Christ, Matthew 8:18-23**
For Reflection Only: Have I truly accepted that "Jesus Christ is Lord"? [p.90]

OF LIFE & SALVATION: Reflection Questions
Session 7: Fifth Epistle & Gospel

1. **Afflictions, 2 Corinthians 1:8-11**
Describe how St. Paul's sharing his spiritual struggles and insights are an apostolic example to us. [p.96]

2. Complete the following: A Scripture verse that gives me confidence to face my afflictions is..... [p.97]

3. **Ready for the Coming of the Lord? Matthew 25:1-13**
How do the Church Fathers understand the five wise maidens? [p.100]

4. Which of the inner dispositions of the five wise maidens strikes me the most when I reflect on this parable? [pp.100-101]

5. "Be ready every day...hour...minute." [p.103] How can we attune our surroundings, our home, to readiness?

OF LIFE & SALVATION: Reflection Questions
Session 8: Sixth Epistle, Reflections 1,2,3 & Gospel

1. **The Works of the Flesh - What a Christian Life Is Not Like, Galatians 5:22-6:3**
What is the definition of "synergy" in this text? [p.108]

2. **The Fruit of the Spirit - What a Christian Life is Like, Galatians 5:22-6:3**
Define "fruit of the Spirit". How is this different from "fruit of the Holy Spirit"? [p.111]

3. **The Fruit of the Spirit - Continued, Galatians 5:22-6:3**
St. Gregory the Theologian notes that in living the Christian life we will be called at one time or another to make a "display of faith in affliction and patient endurance in misfortune." [p.116] What is my reaction to this statement?

4. List the "fruits of the Spirit". Which one appeals to me as something especially precious? Why? Which of the fruits have I begun to understand more clearly from this reading?

5. **Faithful Persistence, Matthew 15: 21-28**
What are the three lessons from the story of the Canaanite woman? [p.124] Which part of this message strikes me the most?

OF LIFE & SALVATION: Reflection Questions
Session 9: Seventh Epistle & Gospel

1. **Christian Freedom, 2 Thessalonians 5:14-24**
Explain how we do God's will "freely"? [p.131]

2. List the Scripture verse that is most meaningful to you at this time from those offered on pages 131-132.

3. **Marching Orders, Matthew 9:9-14**
Some actions that define a "servant's" life are listed on pages 138-139. Which of these do I want to pursue with greater zeal? (If this study is being conducted during Lent, add "as we partake of the last week of Lent and Holy Week.")