

Reflection Questions for

WAY OF THE ASCETICS

by Tito Colliander

Session 1: Introduction-Chapter 5

Session 2: Chapters 6 - 9

Session 3: Chapters 10 - 13

Session 4: Chapters 14 - 17

Session 5: Chapters 18 - 22

Session 6: Chapters 23 - 26

The following set of reflection questions were developed by Presbytera Helene Hall in the Spring of 1994 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. Of Life and Salvation by Fr. Stanley Harakas.
3. Raising Them Right by Theofan the Recluse.
4. Our Hearts True Home edited by Virginia Nieuwsma.
5. Videotape of Fr. Thomas Hopko: "God's People at Work - Being Christian in the Modern World".
6. A Year of the Lord [5 volumes] Bible Study by Fr. Ted Stylianopoulos.
7. Beginning to Pray by Archbishop Anthony Bloom.

WAY OF THE ASCETICS: Reflection Questions

Session 1: Introduction - Chapter 5

Answer these questions honestly. Answers will remain confidential unless you choose to share.

Chapter 1: "On a Resolute & Sustained Purpose"

"You have cast off your old humanity; let the rags lie." As we begin this study series / Lenten period what will cast off or change?

Chapter 2: "On the Insufficiency of Human Strength"

Which sentence in this chapter is the most compelling?

Chapter 3: "On the Garden of the Heart"

How do we enter our own innermost chamber?

Chapter 4: "On the Silent & Invisible Warfare"

Can you name a time when something happened in your life which at the time you could not understand, but was necessary for you in your warfare?

Chapter 5: "On the Denial of Self & the Cleansing of the Heart"

"Do not seek freedom & freedom will be given you." How is this possible? How can I begin to establish this in my life this week?

WAY OF THE ASCETICS Reflection Questions

Session 2: Chapters 6 - 9

Chapter 6: "On Eradicating the Desire for Enjoyment"

What scripture verse can help me crush my desire for enjoyment?

Chapter 7: "On the Transfer of Love from the Self to Christ"

Is there a 'busyness' in my life that I am better off without?

Chapter 8: "On Guarding against the Re-Entry of Vanquished Evil"

Which admonition in this chapter is the most difficult for me to put into practice?

Chapter 9: "On the Conquest of the World"

From which item on St. Isaac the Syrian's list do I need to free myself?

Something that especially touched me this week because of my Lenten / spiritual journey was...

WAY OF THE ASCETICS: Reflection Questions
Session 3: Chapters 10 - 13

Chapter 10: "On the Sins of Others and One's Own"

What is St. Isaac's formula for combating the enemy?

Chapter 11: On the Inner Warfare as a Means to an End"

Those who 'labor on their salvation and are heavy-laden with the world's opposition' receive what earthly and heavenly rewards?

Chapter 12: "On Obedience"

How can I practice obedience in my own home?

Chapter 13: "On Progress in Depth"

What interior wrestling do I feel now that might hinder my spiritual progress?

A Lenten / daily meditation or scripture that would benefit this group is....

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Session 4: Chapters 14 - 17

Chapter 14: "On Humility and Watchfulness"

List the 4 steps to engage in inner warfare.

Since the beginning of Lent/this series, which has been the hardest for me?

"The less strength you credit yourself with, the more surely you stand." Do I see this being lived out around me? Can you think of a saint that comes to mind?

Chapter 15: "On Prayer"

Select a sentence from this chapter that will encourage you in our prayer life.

Chapter 16: "On Prayer"

"Enjoyment increases with proficiency, proficiency comes with practice." Am I a morning or night person?

If I had a perfect prayer time, which hour of the day is best for me?

Which spot in my house?

What else would be a good way to enhance this time with God?

Chapter 17: "On Prayer"

Name the 4 constituent parts of prayer.

How do they apply to the 'Jesus Prayer'?

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Session 5: Chapters 18 - 22

Chapter 18: "On Prayer"

Select a short verse from the Psalter [Book of Psalms] to repeat during the day.

Chapter 19: "On the Bodily & Mental Accompaniments of Prayer"

Explain 'true joy is the joy of consolation.'

Chapter 20: "On Fasting"

Which sentence about fasting struck me the most?

Chapter 21: "On the Avoidance of Extravagance"

What are the fruits of love?

Which ones am I struggling with this week?

Chapter 22: "On the Use of Material Things"

Describe something of beauty that you saw this week that is a reminder of God's glory.

WAY OF THE ASCETICS Reflection Questions

Session 6: Chapters 23 - 26

Chapter 23: "On Times of Darkness"

How have I been able to find meaning in the days where 'God has left'?

Chapter 24: "On an Interpretation of Zaccheus"

Read Genesis 12:1. Of the things that Abraham is challenged to leave behind, what is hardest for me to let go?

Chapter 25: "On the Jesus Prayer"

How have I realized the power of the spiritual weapon of the Jesus Prayer during this Lenten period / study series?

Chapter 26: "On the Pearl of Great Price"

What do I want to remember about this chapter?

What has been the most meaningful message that I have received from this book?