

West Meets East
Evangelicals, theosis and the presence of God

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts Degree in Biblical Studies

College of Christian Ministries

University of the Nations

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DOEA01XXXXX

March 20, 2017

Declaration of Originality: I declare that this thesis, along with the 28-day program is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Kyiv, Ukraine, March 2017

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Angela Marie Doerksen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.

Angela Marie Doerksen

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Abstract

There has been little quantitative and qualitative research on the effects of evangelicals learning about the Orthodox doctrine of theosis. There have been authors claiming it may benefit evangelicals, and academic books have been written to teach evangelicals regarding the doctrine, but no one has produced a mainstream program to teach it and test the effects. This study first created a 28-day program to expose evangelicals to theosis, and then used both a quantitative methodology and qualitative methodology to examine the effects of the program (maintaining a control group as well as the treatment group). The results of the quantitative research was such that the independent samples t -test was associated with a non-statistically significant effect, $t(32) = 0.97$, $p = 0.338$. Therefore, we failed to reject the null hypothesis, possibly due to a Type II error. The qualitative research was gathered by open-ended survey questions after the participants completed the 28-day program. In the non-theosis group ($n=32$, 2 questions*16) there were only 2 comments stating that the participant was aware of God's presence or his help throughout the day. This contrasts the theosis program group ($n=36$, 2 questions*18), with 13 comments. This indicates a distinct difference in experience. This research affirms that learning about theosis is a beneficial experience for evangelicals. It deepens their awareness of God's presence and his help in daily life.

Key Terms: Theosis, deification, evangelicals, Orthodoxy, Philokalia, presence of God.

Acknowledgements

Many people helped me to write this thesis. First, I am thankful for the team of people that send and partner financially with our family. I could not have taken the time to study, nor could we do ministry here in Ukraine and in the surrounding countries without them. I want to acknowledge the team of overseas workers that we partner with here at YWAM Ukraine, specifically our Team.710 biblical studies circle as well as the leadership team. I have been less available to teach and lead due to the time it takes to complete a project such as this. I am grateful to them for their grace and patience. Special thanks goes to the 40 people who willingly volunteered to be a part of this research, dedicating 28 mornings and evenings to complete the program. I am also very thankful that my home pastor, Bruce Adams, has always encouraged my husband and me to continue academic studies in the midst of ministry.

I also want to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Wilrens Hornstra. He never failed to push me to be concrete in my aims, narrow in my target and broad in my application. He challenged me personally with the content of the study, as well as professionally in excellence. His numerous revisions and comments helped my language to be more precise and consistent. He also helped me to think deeply and critically, and yet have a positive outlook, on the results of the study. The process of writing this thesis lasted over a year and he always made time every week to pray with me and talk me through the next step, I truly would not have completed this study without him.

My family has patiently watched me focus and study day after day, usually waking up to find me at the computer. My husband has taken on extra responsibilities with ministry and our family throughout this year as I have sought to grow deeper. I'm so thankful that God has given me such a wonderful family, and specifically a supportive, faithful husband. My parents have also always challenged me to do my best and to never stop learning.

And lastly, I want to thank God whose purpose for me in this master's thesis has been much deeper than completing a degree. It has been to truly experience theosis in my personal life. I pray that this process does not stop now that I have completed this thesis, but that I grow more and more to be the human that God designed, empowered by the Holy Spirit living within me.

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Chapter 1. Research Question

Background

A case could be made that every research study is motivated by the personal experiences of the researcher himself. As a Canadian evangelical Christian, it was in my late twenties that I began to see signs of spiritual discontentment among my friends and fellow evangelicals. They were going to church weekly, reading their Bibles on a regular basis and perhaps even serving in leadership positions in their churches. However, when I would ask them if they were aware of God's presence in their everyday life, their answer would commonly be, "Sometimes, but not really." If I asked them if they thought they were growing in their faith, most didn't even know what that would look like. At this time I was not measuring or recording these comments, it was simply an overall impression; when it came to the active experience of God in daily life, many evangelicals seemed dissatisfied and lost.

It was about this time when my husband and I moved overseas as Bible teachers. We moved to Ukraine, where the majority of the population identifies as Orthodox Christians. It seemed sensible to study the beliefs of the population that was our main target audience. I was ignorant of the differences that separated Protestant Christians and Orthodox Christians.

I began to read several books written about Orthodoxy. One of the books I read was *Becoming Orthodox* by Peter Gillquist (2009). Gillquist was a leader in Campus Crusade for Christ, an evangelical campus ministry in America. Over time he became frustrated, not with Christianity, but with the evangelical expression of it. Ultimately he chose to leave the evangelical church and convert to Orthodoxy, along with 260 others from Campus Crusade (3). Gillquist states he became disillusioned with the evangelical movement (7). He describes

that he and his colleagues were “dissatisfied -or better to say, unsatisfied- with the status quo of what we perceived as dull, denominational American Christianity” (4). It occurred to me that he was experiencing the same challenge I observed with my friends and fellow evangelicals. I wondered what it was he found in the Orthodox expression of Christianity that was more satisfying than the evangelical expression. Gillquist wrote that one of the reasons that he became disillusioned with the evangelical movement was the lack of life change he observed in the campus culture, this in spite of the work he and his colleagues were doing (7). So what did the Orthodox expression of Christianity offer specifically in the area of life change that Gillquist’s evangelical experience did not?

Orthodoxy, Evangelicalism and Theosis

Orthodoxy is a branch of Christianity that claims to have begun with the apostles directly after the life of Jesus. In 1054 C.E the Christian church split due to multiple factors, political as well as doctrinal. One cause was that the churches of the East refused to prioritize Rome. This led to the division between, what came to be known as, Orthodox Christians and Catholic Christians. In 1517 C.E another major split occurred in Christianity. A growing group of discontented Christians, led by Martin Luther, left the Catholic Church. It is this branch of Christianity from which evangelicals stem. Therefore, evangelicals are two steps away from Orthodoxy historically and are unfamiliar with many of the doctrines and practices of this ancient Christian church. They are both included under the umbrella of Christianity but Orthodoxy looks very different than evangelicalism, especially in the area of practice. The focus in the Orthodox Church is on membership by baptism and worship through the sacraments. The Bible is authoritative but must be interpreted by church leadership. In addition, traditions are esteemed as originating from the apostles themselves, therefore are also authoritative. Right belief is significant, but right worship, which includes

belonging to the church and participating in the sacraments, is essential. In fact, the term Orthodox comes from the Greek words *Orthos* and *Doxa* which mean *right worship*.

Evangelicals are a subgroup of Protestantism with a specific set of beliefs. John Stackhouse is the senior advisor to the Centre for Research on Canadian Evangelicalism. He defines evangelicals as those who adhere to all of the following tenets:

- Orthodox and Orthoprax: Evangelicals subscribe to the main tenets—doctrinal, ethical, and liturgical—of the churches to which they belong.
- Crucicentric: Evangelicals are Christocentric in their piety and preaching, and emphasize particularly the necessity of Christ’s salvific work on the Cross.
- Biblicist: Evangelicals affirm the Bible as God’s Word written, true in what it says and functioning as their supreme written guide for life.
- Conversionist: Evangelicals believe that (1) everyone must trust Jesus as Saviour and follow him as Lord; and (2) everyone must co-operate with God in a life of growing spiritual maturity.
- Missional: Evangelicals actively co-operate with God in his mission of redeeming the world, and particularly in the proclamation of the gospel.
- Transdenominational: Evangelicals gladly partner with other Christians who hold these concerns, regardless of denominational stripe, in work to advance the Kingdom of God (2007, 1).

As an evangelical studying Orthodoxy, I found there were many intriguing differences. Among the differences, one particular doctrine seemed to offer a solution to the dissatisfaction previously noted: theosis. This is a doctrine that focuses on experiencing the presence of God in one’s life, which in turn leads to life change. Orthodox theologians, when explaining theosis, will often quote the early church father Athanasius. He wrote the famous words, “God became man so that men might become gods” (2011, 25:192B). Athanasius was, and Orthodox theologians are still today, convinced that Jesus made this possible. The final goal to which every Christian must aim is to “attain theosis, ‘deification’ or ‘divinization’” (Ware 1997, 231). Daniel Clendenin, in his article “Partaker of Divinity- The Orthodox Doctrine of Theosis,” clarifies,

The contemporary Greek Orthodox theologian Christoforos Stavropoulos summarizes this Orthodox vision: In the Holy Scriptures, where God Himself speaks, we read of a unique call directed to us. God speaks to us human beings clearly and

directly and He says: “I said, ‘You are gods, sons of the most high—all of you’” (Ps. 82:6 and John 10:34). Do we hear that voice? Do we understand the meaning of this calling? Do we accept that we should in fact be on a journey, a road which leads to Theosis? As human beings we each have this one, unique calling, to achieve Theosis. In other words, we are each destined to become a god; to be like God Himself, to be united with Him. The Apostle Peter describes with total clarity the purpose of life: we are to “become partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). This is the purpose of your life; that you be a participant, a sharer in the nature of God and in the life of Christ, a communicant of divine energy—to become just like God, a true God. “Man,” writes Gregory of Nazianzus, “has been ordered to become God (Clendenin 1994, 365).

The Philokalia is an important collection of Orthodox texts from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries compiled by St. Nicodimos the Hagiorite (1749–1809). One of these texts, the Theoretikon, puts it this way, “Now the purpose of our life is blessedness ... not only to behold the Trinity, supreme in Kingship, but also to receive an influx of the divine and, as it were, to suffer deification” (Nikodimos and Makarios 1983, 356).

Orthodox theologians point to a variety of scriptures as the biblical basis for theosis. The first reference is in Genesis 1:23-26 (*English Standard Version*) when humans are made in the image and likeness of God. Orthodox theologians believe that when Jesus rose from the dead, he gave mankind the ability to return to that likeness as was intended from the beginning. John’s Gospel also points to this when Jesus Christ prays that his followers may be one with each other and he will be one with them just as he is one with God (John 17:21-23). Paul the apostle references this theme in many of his letters such as Colossians 1:27 where he speaks of Christ being in the believer. Moreover, Peter’s second letter has the famous statement that is used by many of the church fathers to teach regarding this doctrine,

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to likeness and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire (1 Peter 1:3-4).

In summarizing the biblical basis for theosis and combining it with his theological perspective, Jared Moore, a pastor and PhD student in Systematic Theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, writes in his online blog,

Theosis is the restoration and reintegration of the “image” or “likeness” of God, seriously distorted by the fall, in the children of God. One must note that theosis is more than the customary Protestant concept of sanctification. In theosis, while there is no ontological change of humanity into deity, there is a real impartation of the divine life to the whole human being—body and soul. In western churches, the concept of the imitation of Christ is the closest analogy to the theosis doctrine of the east; however, in Orthodox theology, Christians are not merely called to imitate Christ, but to manifest the energies of the Holy Spirit. Through receiving the Spirit, Christians have access to the spiritual power that belongs to Christ. The basis for such theosis is primarily the incarnation of Christ: the Orthodox Church believes God joined humanity to divinity in the incarnation so that human beings might assume godlikeness and be imagers of God in His divine life, characters, and actions. The grace of God is essential, but so is human vigilance in obedience to all God has commanded. (2012)

Theosis and Evangelicals

Most evangelicals have not heard the term theosis. They have not been clearly presented with this aspect of salvation. The Western church has historically focused on judicial categories of salvation. Theologians such as Augustine, Karl Barth and Martin Luther are generally considered pillars of western theology. Christians, having studied their works concerning the crucial foundation of justification, have had their framework of salvation formed by these teachings.

Dan Clendenin proposes that these judicial categories, while helpful and biblical, are not complete, and can result in lack of direction. Writing about the doctrine of theosis in the Eastern Church, he states, “The real issue here seems to be one of a difference of emphasis—the east emphasizing mystical union through theosis, the west emphasizing juridical categories. No necessity forces us to choose between the two or to see them as mutually exclusive categories that are contradictory” (1994, 367).

If evangelicals are dissatisfied, perhaps they are not experiencing this mystical union. Stated another way, perhaps they are unaware of God's presence in their daily lives; making their lives seem empty. Could an understanding of theosis increase an evangelical's awareness of God's presence? Rakestraw proposes that an evangelical "may take a kind of quantum leap forward by understanding sanctification as the very life and energy of God in us." He goes on to say, "we are becoming increasingly like God because we are participating more and more in his divine nature. As Christians, our bodies are in very truth temples of the indwelling Spirit, who radiates his presence and power through us to others" (Rakestraw 1997, 269). This leads to the question, what has been done to help evangelicals understand theosis?

Dan Clendenin has written two highly academic texts, *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader* (2004) and *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective* (2004). These texts have sections on theosis but are unlikely to be read by the average evangelical. Timothy Kallistos Ware has published *The Orthodox Way* (1979) and *The Orthodox Church* (1997) but these are dense books filled with difficult theological vocabulary. Another example of a book exploring theosis from a western perspective is *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Gorman 2009). All of these books seem designed for academic use and are difficult for the average reader to access.

Journal publications also include articles about theosis and evangelicalism. Primarily these articles focus on theosis and its influence on many famous historical Christians such as John Calvin (Ollerton 2011), Jonathan Edwards (Strobel 2012), and Martin Luther (Trueman 2003).

Far less common have been articles written with the aim of convincing evangelicals that there is merit to applying the doctrine of theosis. Michael W. Austin wrote *The Doctrine of Theosis: A Transformational Union with Christ*. He argues that evangelicals would benefit from being introduced to theosis (2015), much like Rakestraw (1997). Austin goes further than Rakestraw by offering ideas how an evangelical could pursue theosis. He advocates memorizing scripture, pursuing virtues and practicing spiritual disciplines in interpersonal relationships. Yet again, these are scholarly works which most evangelicals will likely never read. Moreover, neither Rakestraw, nor Austin attempt to empirically validate their claim. In summary, the discussion has remained in the area of theory and debate amongst academics.

Thesis Question

This research project studied empirically the effects that learning about theosis had on evangelicals, specifically in the area of how an evangelical experiences the presence of God. Theosis is a doctrine that addresses spiritual experience: the presence of God dwelling in man, and man's awareness of that presence. Due to this fact, this was an appropriate effect to measure. This is a highly personal, subjective matter; this research measured awareness of God's presence by participant's self-evaluation.

Currently, as has been noted above, there is no material available for teaching about theosis to evangelicals in a way that is appealing and accessible. Therefore, a 28-day program was developed to teach the basics of theosis and to lead participants of the study through a theosis experience. The content of this program is discussed in chapter 2.

In short, this research study tested whether or not a 28-day program introducing evangelicals to theosis led to an increased awareness of God's presence in their lives.

Delineation and Limitations

While it would have been interesting to consider evangelicals from different countries, or even different subgroups of Christianity, and compare their experiences with theosis, this would not have been practical or feasible. Therefore, this study only considered adult Canadian evangelicals. Furthermore, as mentioned above, it focused specifically on personal awareness of God's presence after being exposed to the doctrine of theosis through the 28-day program. Though there may be other effects, these were not measured.

Ethical Considerations

There are not many ethical considerations due to the fact that all of the participants chose to participate voluntarily. The names of the participants have been kept confidential, and all survey responses were anonymous. In addition, no financial remuneration was given; therefore there was no incentive to participate due to finance stress.

Chapter 2. Methodology

28-Day Program Development

The independent variable for this research experiment was the 28-day program that was developed to engage evangelicals with theosis. When creating this program three different issues needed to be considered: format, content, and length of time.

This format was developed because evangelicals are familiar with the practice of a 'quiet time.' This generally refers to a short period of time that can be anywhere from 5-60 minutes where a person reads a portion of their Bible as well as prays. It may also include singing worship songs and journaling. Many evangelicals do this in the morning when they

first wake up or perhaps right before bed. A study by The Barna Group found that 72% of American adults classified as “born again” reported having had a ‘Quiet Time’ during the past week (Barna 2001). Therefore this is a familiar practice that could be used to introduce theosis.

The content that was included in the program needed to introduce theosis. Orthodox theologians use a text called the *Philokalia* to do this with their own members.

The *Philokalia* is considered to be the chief means of theosis among Orthodox believers in addition to the Bible. The *Philokalia* (literally, “love of the beautiful”) is considered by many to be the chief instrument or means of deification. This multivolume work, containing writings of Orthodox Christians from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries, teaches that theosis is bestowed by grace through faith, not by works. Yet there is a definite synergism in the path to theosis. While the grace of God is mightily at work, the Christian’s *nepsis* is essential. *Nepsis* is a Greek word for vigilance, watchfulness, intensity, zeal spiritual wariness. Some ways in which it is expressed include asceticism (fastings, vigils, prostrations, tears, repentance), contemplation, continual utterance of the name of Jesus in prayer, participation in the sacraments, keeping the commandments of God, and, above all, loving one another.” (Stavropoulos 1995, 237)

This seemed to be an obvious choice to work with as a resource in developing the program. However, it is a very large text and it can be difficult to navigate. Allyn Smith created an annotated version of the *Philokalia*, and organized it by seven main topics as opposed to by author (as the original version does). He also selected smaller portions of text under each topic (Smith 2012). These seven topics are: repentance, the heart, prayer, the Jesus Prayer, the passions, stillness, and theosis.

While evangelicals are open to reading other texts and books to help with spiritual growth, the main source for authority in their lives is the Bible. Therefore, this program also had to include the Bible for evangelicals to be willing to interact with it. The Orthodox tradition does not negate the Bible in favour of the *Philokalia*, but instead sees the *Philokalia* as helping to understand scriptures.

No, it is not more exalted or holier than the Bible, but it contains enlightened explanations of what is mystically contained in the Bible, and it is so lofty that it is not easily comprehended by our shortsighted intellects. Let me give you an illustration. The sun is the greatest, the most resplendent and magnificent source of light, but you cannot contemplate or examine it with the simple naked eye. You would need to use a special viewing lens, which, though a million times smaller and dimmer than the sun, would enable you to study this magnificent source of all light and to endure and delight in its fiery rays. Thus the Holy Scriptures are like a brilliant sun, for which the *Philokalia* is the lens needed in order to view it. (Anonymous 2001, 15)

Therefore, the daily readings alternated *Philokalia* text with Scripture text. The program is found in appendix 1.

Finally, the length of program was determined. In order to have participants really engage with theosis the program could not be too short, but for practical purposes could not be too long. Another consideration was the fact that there were seven topics to cover.

Therefore, with these two considerations in mind, the program was designed to be completed in 28 days, with 4 days per topic.

The 28-day program is one way of educating evangelicals on this doctrine. This study is not comprehensively looking at seminars, church history classes or other types of engagement that could happen with theosis.

Research Design

This experiment was conducted using a randomized two-group, single blind, control-group design. Participants were recruited using a non-probability sampling method via Facebook (see recruiting text in appendix 2). Participants had to self-identify as an evangelical and also be a Canadian. Each participant volunteered under the assumption that they would participate in the study for 28 days with a devotional that would be mailed to them (including filling out a short survey before and after). The recruiting text was posted as public and was encouraged to be shared with any friends or family members that self-identified as evangelical and Canadian using the snowballing sampling technique. This

helped reduce bias that might come from being familiar with the researcher. This research was designed in such a way to give initial results that would lead to the further studies, while taking costs into consideration. Therefore, the sample group for the study is not representative and cannot be extrapolated to the larger Canadian evangelical population.

Once the volunteers were accepted to be a part of the research they were mailed the 28-day program in a sealed envelope and asked not to open it until given permission. Each person was then randomly assigned to either Group A (who would use the program booklet) or the control Group B (those who would be asked to do 10-15 minutes of whatever ‘quiet time’ they would normally do as an evangelical). This was to ensure that the independent variable was indeed the theosis teaching and not an increase in the normal ‘quiet time’ routine going from possibly only 3-4 days a week to 7.

After completing an anonymous online survey with nine questions (see appendix 3) participants in group A were told to open their envelope and start the program the next day. Participants who had been assigned to group B were told to do any type of ‘quiet time’ they would like, whether journaling, reading the bible, singing or journaling. They were also told not to open the envelope until after the 28 days of quiet times were done. Once participants finished, they were again administered the same survey with two additional open-ended questions. All participants were advised that if they missed more than 4 days of the 28, they would no longer be a part of the study.

Survey

In order to determine whether or not those in the program had a greater awareness of God’s presence as opposed to those not in the program, both quantitative and qualitative data was gathered. Participants were asked 9 general questions regarding their Christian life. Mixed within the 9 questions was the dependent variable being tested, “During the average

day, how aware are you of the presence of God in your life?" The participants were blind to the fact that this particular question was the one being tested. They were asked to rate their awareness of God on a sliding scale with 1 being, "I don't sense the presence of God at all," to 100 being, "I deeply sense the presence of God." In the post-test survey, administered after completing the 28 days, participants were additionally asked: 1) How would you describe your experience during the past 28 days? 2) In what way, if any, has your participation made a difference for you?

Chapter 3. Results

Quantitative Data– Pretest prior to theosis program

The pretest theosis program group ($n=21$) associated themselves with experiencing God's presence $M = 65.62$ ($SD = 26.96$). By comparison, the non-theosis group ($n=23$) associated themselves with an extremely similar evaluation $M = 65.52$ ($SD = 21.79$). A Shapiro Wilk's test ($p>.05$) and a visual inspection of their histograms, normal Q-Q plots and box plots showed that the scores were approximately normally distributed for both the theosis group and the non-theosis group prior to the program. A skewness of 0.750 ($SE=0.501$) and kurtosis of 0.106 ($SE=0.972$) for the theosis group and a skewness of -0.434 ($SE=0.481$) and kurtosis of -0.110 ($SE=0.935$) for the non-theosis group also confirmed homogeneity. Additionally, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested and satisfied via Levene's F test, $F(42) = 1.53$, $p=.222$. The independent samples t -test was associated with a non-statistically significant effect, $t(42)= 0.01$, $p = 0.990$. Thus, between the theosis group and the non-theosis group prior to the program, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, before the theosis program, both groups were statistically equivalent. See appendix 4 for raw data.

Quantitative Data– Posttest after the thesis program

To test the hypothesis that thesis program would be correlated with participants recording higher self-evaluations of experiencing God's presence, an independent sample *t*-test was performed on the post-program results between the participants and the control group using an alpha level of .05. The thesis program group ($n=18$) associated themselves with experiencing God's presence $M = 71.33$ ($SD = 23.47$). By comparison, the non-thesis group ($n=16$) associated themselves with a numerically smaller $M = 64.06$ ($SD = 19.68$).

Once again, the distributions were sufficiently normal for the purposes of conducting a *t*-test according to Levene's *F* test, $F(32) = .11$, $p=.747$. A Shapiro Wilk's test ($p>.05$) and a visual inspection of their histograms, normal Q-Q plots and box plots showed that the scores were approximately normally distributed for both the thesis group and the non-thesis group after the program. A skewness of -0.891 ($SE=0.536$) and kurtosis of 0.321 ($SE=1.038$) for the thesis group and a skewness of -0.120 ($SE=0.564$) and kurtosis of -0.852 ($SE=1.091$) for the non-thesis group also confirmed homogeneity. The independent samples *t*-test was associated with a non-statistically significant effect, $t(32)= 0.97$, $p = 0.338$. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the mean is greater in the thesis group and the *p*-value was closer to the .05 standard of significance in the posttest compared to the pretest. Cohen's *d* was calculated at 0.34 , which is a small to medium effect based on Cohen's (1992) guidelines. Therefore, while we cannot be sure that the increase in *M* between the thesis group and the non-thesis group is due to the program, we do observe a change in the direction of significance.

Qualitative Data– Posttest after the theosis program

Prior to the program, no open-ended questions were asked of the participants in the survey. After the program, both the theosis group and the non-theosis group were asked two further questions and given open space to write their answers as long or as short as they would like. The questions were, “How would you describe your journey over the past 28 days?” and “In what way, if any, has your participation made a difference for you?” These questions were asked with the intention of looking for responses that corresponded to the theme of awareness of God’s presence in one’s life. A large difference was seen in between these two groups regarding their experience of God’s presence.

In the non-theosis group ($n=32$, 2 questions *16) there were only 2 references to being aware of God’s presence or his help throughout the day. For the group that went through the theosis program ($n=36$, 2 questions*18), there were 13 that commented on the topic of God’s presence in their daily life. This indicates a distinct difference in experience.

Table 1

References to God’s presence, awareness of God or his help throughout the day

Group	Non-Theosis Program (n=32)	Theosis Program (n=36)
Awareness of God, his presence, or his help throughout the day	<p>“I believe it has helped me to become more disciplined and I feel <i>God's presence</i> throughout the day more clearly.”</p> <p>“In returning to daily prayer and meditation, I more clearly saw the direction of God, and his working in my <i>day to day</i> life.”</p>	<p>“It was great to begin my day thinking and praying about the different things. And it helped throughout the day to remind me of <i>God's presence</i> but also of how I am acting/ living according to his will.”</p> <p>“It was fulfilling and made me even more aware of the <i>presence of God</i> and filled with the Holy Spirit within my soul.”</p> <p>“It has helped me see the <i>presence of God</i> in so many more ways and fills my soul with so much more empathy towards</p>

		<p>everyone. Also helped me clear my thoughts about what people do towards me and forgive them and just move on and look at the good side of things.”</p> <p>“I am more aware of <i>God's presence</i> in my life and I think the last 28 days have changed how I think about my alone time with God.”</p> <p>“I have loved the focus it has brought me for searching my own heart, being still before God, and bringing prayer more into focus <i>throughout my day</i>.”</p> <p>“I have seen how the morning meditations <i>echo through my day</i> and keep me focused on Godly things.”</p> <p>“It has helped me to feel more joy and peace <i>on an average day</i>. I feel like I have been able to focus more on the real purpose of life throughout what would normally be a mundane, normal day.”</p> <p>“It gave me reminders <i>throughout the day</i> on things to reflect upon which helped me feel like I was/am living an active faith with an active God.”</p> <p>“Made me <i>more aware of God</i>.”</p> <p>“I feel like it has <i>made me more aware of God in my daily life</i> and it has also helped me to anticipate God more in my life.”</p> <p>“It has encouraged me to draw closer to God. I need God in <i>every area of my life</i>.”</p> <p>“I think this would be a good teaching tool for practicing him back <i>into one's life throughout the day</i>.”</p> <p>“Been helpful to see the hand of <i>God throughout the day</i>.”</p>
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In summary, the mean increase of awareness of God’s presence, Cohen’s *d* effect, and the qualitative results point to a positive correlation between the theosis program and an increased awareness of the presence of God throughout one’s daily life.

An unexpected result was the more positive experience that the theosis program group had in comparison to the control group. Out of the 36 responses for the theosis group, only 2 responses included neutral or negative comments. Out of the 32 responses in the non-theosis group, there were 10 comments that were neutral or negative. Clearly, this was a more positive experience for the theosis group.

Table 2

Emotions reflected in the responses of the theosis group and the control group

Group	Non-Theosis Program (n=32)	Theosis Program (n=36)
Positive comments regarding the experience	<p>“My experience in the last 28 days has been good.”</p> <p>“Very fulfilling”</p> <p>“I more clearly saw the direction of God”</p> <p>“I have been reading my bible in conjunction with a devotional and its been fun and enlightening, because there are things that I either didn’t remember or are different from what I remember.”</p> <p>“A good challenge for me to be consistent. I noticed more patience with my children these last 28 days”</p> <p>“I did a prayer challenge praying scripture for five people to become saved. I looked forward to it everyday. I asked for glimpses of hope and received them when I needed them.”</p>	<p>“It was very helpful to me. At first I didn't feel the usefulness but as I progressed it felt as though He was laying down for me what I needed to do ahead of time. Close to the end of the study it became real and very helpful.”</p> <p>“Very good. It was nice to have something set to study and do.”</p> <p>“It was great to begin my day thinking and praying about the different things.”</p> <p>“Refreshing to be reminded of how powerful yet simple it is to lean into Truth.”</p> <p>“It has helped me slow down and listen to what God is saying. It has been a challenge to complete but it was worth it.”</p> <p>“There were quite a few insightful thoughts and practices that brought</p>

	<p>“Focusing! It was nice to have that focus. I did a study on joy and deliberately chose joy throughout the month, even when there was loss and tremendous stress.”</p> <p>“I enjoyed having this sense of accountability to spend time with God every morning and evening”</p> <p>“It has been really helpful to spend time with God each day for 28 days.”</p> <p>“The evening reflection has been a wonderful tool for my spiritual growth”</p> <p>“My temper doesn’t flare quite as much. I feel calmer.”</p> <p>“It gave me a new love for praying scripture. The proof that doing a devotion at the start of my day is a mindful practice that can set the tone for the day.”</p> <p>“Gave me additional motivation to have regular quiet times.”</p> <p>“I believe it has helped me to become more disciplined.”</p> <p>“I’ve felt calmer and better able to handle difficult situations that have come, and I’ve had more peace in general.”</p>	<p>energy to my day.”</p> <p>“I have loved the focus it has brought me for searching my own heart, being still before God, and bringing prayer more into focus throughout my day.”</p> <p>“I have felt buoyed in my faith by remembering the deep history of the Christian faith. I have felt encouraged by the timeless messages.”</p> <p>“Good to get in the habit of doing devotions in the morning.”</p> <p>“Hopeful”</p> <p>“It was fulfilling”</p> <p>“I feel like I have been able to focus more on the real purpose of life throughout what would normally be a mundane, normal day.”</p> <p>“It was a good experience.”</p> <p>“Instead of feeling the rejection of the Holy Spirit I felt a blessing and my family received so much blessing.”</p> <p>“It came at a very timely moment in my life. I will pass it on.”</p> <p>“It made me more disciplined to take time/make time for my devotions.”</p> <p>“I have really seen the benefit of taking time every morning. It has also helped me see the areas in my life that really need to change.”</p> <p>“Got me excited again about using my imagination and actively participating in acts that remind me of my connection to God.”</p> <p>“It has been good to read the writings of different faith fathers and to consider what they say.”</p>
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		<p>“My enthusiasm to read God's Word for myself every day has increased.”</p> <p>“It has realigned my universe...seeing God for who He is and me for who I am in relation to Him.”</p> <p>“It has helped me.”</p> <p>“I have felt encouraged in my pursuit of growth, and have such respect for the number of people who have come before me - following Jesus and seeking to reflect Him to the world. I have felt like I am in good company and that is so encouraging.”</p> <p>“It has encouraged me to draw closer to God.”</p> <p>“Overall I enjoyed the extra nudgings.”</p> <p>“Reflecting at the end of the day has been helpful.”</p>
<p>Negative or neutral comments regarding the experience</p>	<p>“Hard to maintain the discipline. Incomplete in finishing my task.”</p> <p>“Nothing has changed.”</p> <p>“Consistent but uneventful.”</p> <p>“Difficult and unexpected”</p> <p>“Nothing really has changed from before”</p> <p>“Challenging to try to keep up with quite times twice a day”</p> <p>“In all honesty it was great in the beginning, but I felt by the end that it was a chore.”</p> <p>“It has added stress to my mornings.”</p> <p>“I was intentional about reading my Bible and felt guilty if I forgot or was late.”</p>	<p>“I enjoyed the devotional but found that some did not apply. Overall, about 40% of the material was useful. I would have preferred more biblical references than doctrinal quotes.”</p> <p>“I should note that I am no more inclined to read ancient Church fathers (or mothers). I found as much confusion as insight from their writings.”</p>

	<p>“It hasn’t really, nothing changed”</p> <p>“I don’t see it as making a difference.”</p>	
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Chapter 4. Discussion

In discussing the results of this research study the following three areas will be considered: how the findings relate to the hypothesis presented in this research, what could be done differently in following studies, and what recommendations can be made regarding theosis and evangelicals for the future.

Experiencing God’s Presence?

This research project was designed to study empirically the effect that learning about theosis has on evangelicals, specifically in the area of how evangelicals experience the presence of God in their daily life. First, it is important to note that the quantitative results were not significant at $p < .05$. Therefore, we are unable to say that the small increase in the mean was not due to chance. This is possibly due to a Type II error with the sample size not being large enough to detect the difference and thus failing to reject the null hypothesis. However, in the open-ended answers, there was a clear difference in experience between those that participated in the theosis program and those that did not.

Participants were unaware of the dependent variable being studied. Therefore, it is significant that the most frequently reported theme in the answers was that participants were *more aware of God’s presence throughout their day*. Moreover, considering the second major theme in the answers, that participants *lived and made choices throughout the day differently*

during the program, a tentative conclusion can be made. There is evidence to suggest that when evangelicals learn about theosis it creates a greater awareness of God throughout their daily lives.

The participants in the theosis program also had positive comments to make about their lives and their daily interaction with God and others. This is an important finding because of the background to this study of evangelical dissatisfaction. Learning about theosis and going through the program was a positive, satisfying experience.

Rakeshaw proposed that evangelicals learning about theosis could take a ‘quantum leap forward’ but no empirical studies testing this theory were found (Rakestraw 1997, 269). While this current research did not see a ‘quantum leap’ it did see a small increase in awareness of God’s presence, as well as a positive experience for the evangelical while going through the theosis program. It seems likely that theosis is an important doctrine, which if taught to evangelicals may help them have a greater awareness of God’s presence, and also have a more positive spiritual experience.

Future Studies

There are many considerations when creating a research design, with positives and negatives for each scenario. This particular design was an independent, blind control group study. It yielded results that seemed to indicate a positive experience and perhaps an increase in awareness of God’s presence, but others designs may yield different information.

Designs such as a paired sample could be utilised to follow the same participant over a longer period of time. This could examine whether the increase of awareness of God is due to the novelty of a ‘new’ doctrine or if the doctrine itself is the source for the change. It is also interesting to note the responses of the control group. They were asked to do a ‘normal

evangelical quiet time' in contrast to the theosis program. The responses in the long answer section by that group indicate that it was quite difficult to maintain a normal 'quiet time.' This suggests that the 'quiet time,' which was assumed in this study to be a normal evangelical behaviour, may not be that normal after all. Participants in this control group may have seen the difference between expected Christian behaviour and their own life reality. This could have led to disappointment with themselves and created the reported negative emotions.

A future question to be considered that developed from this study is the question regarding the impact of structured Bible study/quiet times as compared to non-structured. As a researcher I would be very interested to find out whether or not evangelicals have a greater experience of God's presence and a more positive outlook on life when they are given a structured booklet to explore the Bible, theology and prayer in comparison to the common instructions that are usually given to evangelicals to 'spend time with God every day.' I often travel to remote places to teach people how to study the Bible for themselves, giving them a three-step method. However, I don't usually give too many further resources. Could this actually be detrimental to their experience of God if they are told there is a better way to study, given a taste of it, and then not given concrete helps with which to follow through?

Recommendations

As mentioned above, because the results were not conclusive and $p > .05$ further research needs to be done in different formats to continue exploring the impact that learning about theosis has on the lives of evangelicals and their experience of God's presence. However, from this study, we can conclude that this 28-day program was an overall positive experience for the majority of the participants. It contributed in a positive way to their experience of God's presence in their day-to-day lives. Therefore, one recommendation

that can be made is that evangelicals should be encouraged to go through this 28-day program, especially if they are feeling dissatisfied in their daily experience of God's presence.

This paper does not have room to discuss the theological merit of theosis. However, in terms of future recommendations, the concept of theosis needs to become a greater focus in the evangelical church. More resources should be created that help evangelicals learn about and apply theosis in their lives. Taking quotes from the *Philokalia* (1983), reading through scriptures that emphasise God's presence in us and with us at all times, practising some key spiritual disciplines, are all helpful to evangelicals. These readings and practices create a positive experience of God's presence in their lives and help them throughout their day. As was shown at the beginning of this paper, most resources exploring theosis are only targeting academics and professionals, but they need to be developed and marketed with regular, everyday evangelicals as their target audience. Resources should be created to present theosis in a weekend seminar format or in a retreat setting as a way to introduce evangelicals to theosis.

Conclusion

If there is a deficit of spiritual experience in the evangelical church today, then it is important to look for what can meet that need. There must be a way for evangelicals to remain within their tradition and still be able to go deeper in this area. They should not need to leave the evangelical tradition and become Orthodox in order to have a deeper experience of God's presence in their lives such as we see with Peter Gillquist (2009). Popular books such as *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster (2012) and *Living in Christ's Presence: Final Words on Heaven and the Kingdom of God* by Dallas Willard (2014) demonstrate that

evangelicals are pursuing this experience of God, and yet are able to remain within their tradition.

Theosis, and specifically this 28-day program, is one way to make a positive difference in the lives of evangelicals. Evangelicals need a deep understanding of all that happened when Jesus died and rose again, in order to live an abundant, satisfying Christian life. West needs to meet East. Jesus did not only die as a sacrifice for sins, he came to restore what was originally broken in the Garden of Eden, God dwelling with man. This restoration is possible. St. Mark the Ascetic lived in the 5th century and is quoted in the *Philokalia*. He summarises the work Jesus did,

When we were in this harsh captivity, ruled by invisible and bitter death, the Master of all visible and invisible creation was not ashamed to humble himself and to take upon himself our human nature, subject as it was to the passions of shame and desire and condemned by divine judgment; and he became like us in all things except that he was without sin (Hebrews 4:15), that is, without ignoble passions. All the penalties imposed by divine judgment upon man for the sin of the first transgression—death, toil, hunger, thirst, and the like—he took upon himself, becoming what we are, so that we might become what he is. The Logos became man, so that man might become Logos. Being rich, he became poor for our sake, so that through his poverty we might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). In his great love for man he became like us, so that through every virtue we might become like him. (Smith 2012, 191)

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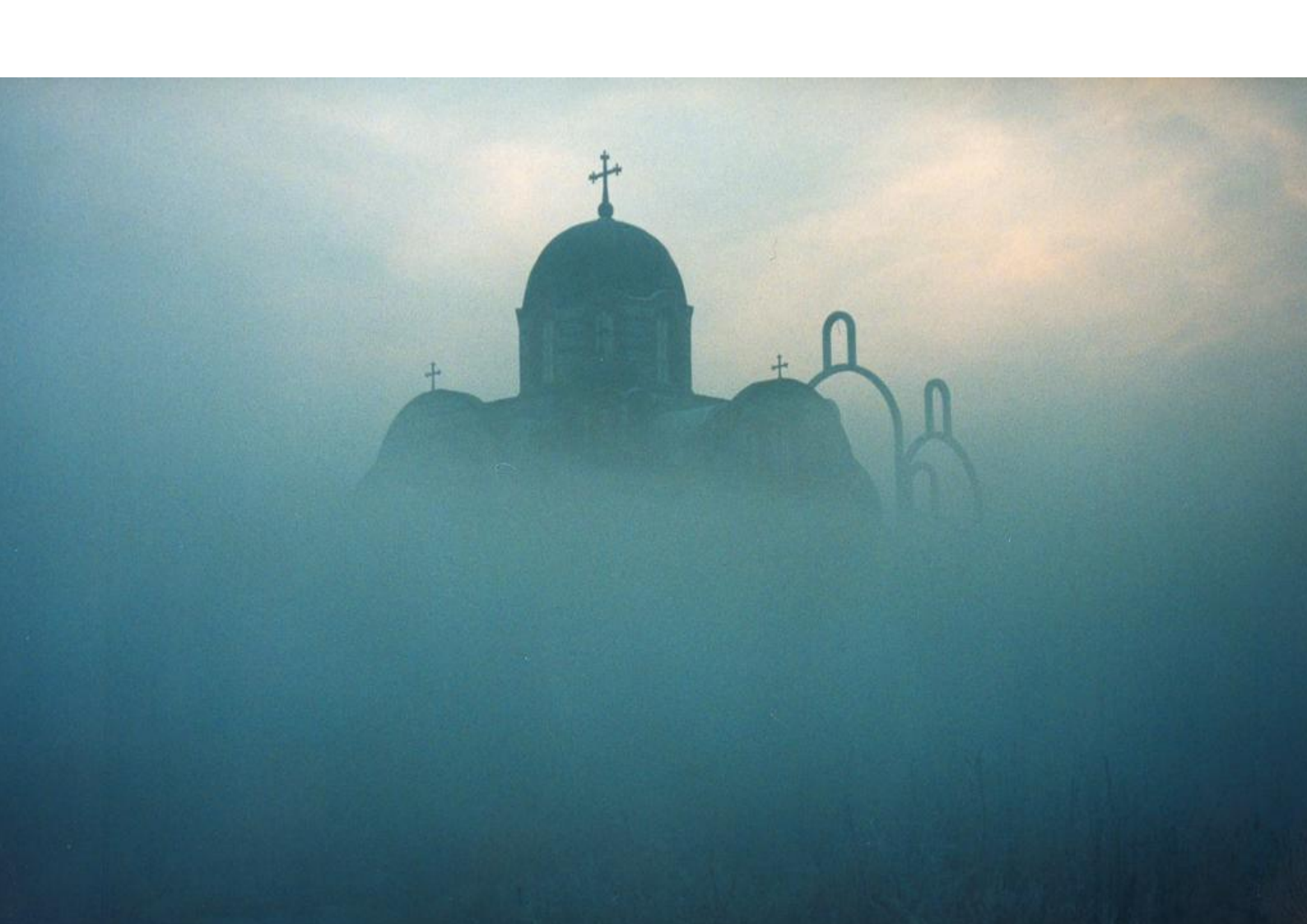
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Appendixes

Appendix 1. Restored, 28-Day Program



Restored

A 28-Day Journey
to a
Transformed Life

This 28-Day Journey is a Master's Degree Thesis Project by Angela Doerksen for the University of the Nations Biblical Studies Program.

All Scripture is quoted from Tyndale House Publishers, Holy Bible: New Living Translation (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2013), unless otherwise stated.

All Philokalia excerpts will be from the translated version: The Philokalia: The Complete Text Volumes I-IV compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountian and St. Makarios of Corinth, translated by G.E.H.Palmer, Philip Sherrard, and Kallistos Ware. Translation copyright © 1979, 1981, 1984, 1995 by the Eling Trust.

The Day Before You Begin – An Introduction.

You can probably remember the day that you got down on your knees (perhaps metaphorically speaking) and invited Jesus to come into your heart. You repented of your sin, you asked for forgiveness, and you walked forward a new creation in Christ.

This may have been a few years ago, or many. Since that time you have been reading your Bible, praying, going to church, listening to Christian music, and genuinely trying to grow closer to Jesus. Do you wonder how to go deeper? If you feel challenged in this area, you are not alone.

Do you wonder how to go deeper? If you feel challenged in this area, you are not alone.

George Barna, an American researcher, has shown that only 2 out of 10 American evangelicals participate in some sort of discipleship program.¹ In another survey the Barna Group identified that “many churchgoers and clergy struggle to articulate a basic understanding of spiritual maturity. People aspire to be spiritually mature, but they do not know what it means.”²

The journal in your hands desires to be an answer to this problem. Two thousand years have passed since Jesus ascended. If we think we need to come up with something new, that no one

¹ George Barna, “New Research in State of the Art Discipleship.” *George Barna Research*. December 1, 2015, accessed March 25, 2016, https://www.barna.org/research/leaders-pastors/research-release/new-research-state-of-discipleship#.VvTQv_195dg.

² George Barna, “Many Churchgoers and Faith Leaders Struggle to Define Spiritual Maturity” *George Barna Research*. May 11, 2009, accessed April 4, 2016, <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/faith-spirituality/264-many-churchgoers-and-faith-leaders-struggle-to-define-spiritual-maturity#.V6fubJgr11J>.

has ever struggled with this in the past, we delude ourselves. In fact, the early church fathers (the earliest leaders of the church), desired to be sanctified in Christ. They examined the scriptures to discover what that meant. Wouldn't it be helpful to know what they discovered and thought as they read the Bible?

We cannot look at everything within this short devotional, but we can look at one perspective that has been taught throughout the history of the church. This perspective is the doctrine of theosis. You may never have heard this term before, so allow me to introduce you.

Theosis - What is it?

When God created humanity, he created Adam and Eve in His own image and likeness.³ When they sinned in the garden, it ultimately destroyed their ability to be the likeness of God in the world. Sin corrupted them. The church fathers believed that Christ came to restore this ability by his death and resurrection. In 1 Peter, the apostle explains how the power and promises of Christ are given to the believer:

*“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you **may become partakers of the divine***

³ Genesis 1:23-26

nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (emphasis mine)''⁴

Athanasius (296-373) was the Bishop of Alexandria only a few hundred years after Christ. He wrote the famous words, “God became man so that men might become gods.”⁵ This may seem

There is more to the human than simply dust, especially when the Holy Spirit chooses to make mankind His dwelling place.

like a very bold, perhaps even heretical statement, but the early church fathers, and others throughout history, were convinced that Jesus made this possible. It is important to distinguish that this is not a ‘new age’ divinization of humans becoming gods. This

is not pantheism. Christians were very clear throughout the ages that humans did not become God Himself. There is a clear distinction between God and humans. Nevertheless there is more to the human than simply dust, especially when the Holy Spirit chooses to make mankind His dwelling place.

Christians throughout the ages have held a high view of the Spirit-filled believer, and in some sense, it seems as though that high view has been lost in the evangelical church today.

So how would the fathers of the church throughout history advise us to grow in Christ? How are we to become more aware of the Spirit in us? How can we become truly *partakers of the divine*

⁴ 2 Peter 1:4-6

⁵ St. Athanasius, *On The Incarnation* - First published in 318, 25:192B.

nature? This particular doctrine is championed and taught in the Orthodox Church of the East⁶ more so than the Catholic and Protestant Church of the West (though there are exceptions). Therefore, we must listen to the Orthodox as we move forward.

Theosis - How does it happen?

Two essential factors in theosis are the Holy Spirit and our cooperation. There is a blending together of our participation and the gracious work of the Spirit. “The Holy Spirit is the main and essential beginning of sanctification. The fathers of the church specifically teach that the theosis of human beings is attributable to the Holy Spirit.”⁷ The Holy Spirit works in a person to draw them to Himself, and to re-create them into the original creation, uncorrupted man. It is only by grace that a person can pursue, or even desire to pursue theosis.

And yet, at the same time, it is a step of one’s free will. No one will be forced to walk on this journey. How does this occur? Which comes first, the grace to choose or the choice to pursue grace? The Orthodox explain it like this, “Grace and human freedom are expressed concurrently and may not be understood the one without the other. There are not two separate moments. At the same time that a person freely makes the decision from within for the good and for the Christian life, at the very same moment divine grace comes and strengthens him. Just as this grace is given to the individual, the individual makes a free choice.”⁸

⁶ Allyn Smith, *Philokalia: The Eastern Christian Spiritual Texts: Selections Annotated & Explained*, trans. G. E. Palmer, P. Sherrard, & K. Ware (Woodstock: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2012), 190-191.

⁷ Christoforos Stavropoulos, *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader*, Editor. Daniel B Clendenin (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1995), 188.

There is an aspect of human cooperation on this journey. “The work of our theosis, our union with God, is not transmitted to us in some kind of mechanical fashion. Our weakened human nature will not be transformed magically. The change will happen in conjunction with our own efforts...God provides the way of theosis which we must follow.”⁹ So the next point to consider is how does one follow?

There are two main texts to incorporate in our pursuit of growth. First is the Bible. It is important to allow the word of God to speak to us regarding this work of the Spirit in our life. The concept of theosis is discovered in many biblical books such as Genesis, Psalms, John, Colossians, 2 Corinthians, and 1 and 2 Peter.

Philokalia
Love of the Beautiful

The second source is more unfamiliar to most evangelicals. It is called the Philokalia. “The Philokalia (literally, “love of the beautiful”) is considered by many to be the chief instrument or means of deification. This multivolume work, containing writings of Orthodox Christians from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries, teaches that theosis is bestowed by grace through faith, not by works. Yet there is a definite synergism in the path to theosis. While the grace of God is mightily at work, the Christian’s nepsis is essential. Nepsis is a Greek word for vigilance, watchfulness, intensity, zeal spiritual wariness. Some ways in which it is expressed include asceticism (fastings, vigils, prostrations, tears, repentance),

⁸ Ibid.,190.

⁹ Ibid., 188.

contemplation, continual utterance of the name of Jesus in prayer, participation in the sacraments, keeping the commandments of God, and, above all, loving one another.”¹⁰

The 28-Day Program.

Throughout these twenty eight days, we will read and pray through both biblical texts and texts from the Philokalia. Allyne Smith took the Philokalia (a very large compilation of texts) and he organized it into seven different sections in his annotated version. We will follow his seven sections: repentance, the heart, prayer, the Jesus Prayer, the passions, stillness, and theosis.¹¹

- ∞ **Every morning** it should not take longer than 15-20 minutes to read, meditate and at times practice a recommended discipline from the daily reading. Some of the practices may continue to be applied throughout the day.
- ∞ **Every evening** before bed will be a time to write down if any significant thoughts, events or feelings occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning.

**If you think of
theosis as a road...**

What are some changes that may occur throughout and after the program?

If you think of theosis as a road on which we are journeying, it is good to know a few signposts that will show us we are going in the right direction. Church fathers have given some ideas as to what these signposts could be.

¹⁰ Ibid., 237.

¹¹ Smith, *Philokalia*, xii.

To begin, “every true Christian tries to love God and to fulfill His commandments; and so long as we sincerely seek to do that, then however weak our attempts may be, and however often we may fall, we are already in some degree deified.”¹² This is important to realize. The fact that we try to love God and fulfill His commandments is evidence that we are on the road at all.

Joy is another signpost that can be expected as theosis occurs in us. “The life of the first human beings in paradise was a life of joy, which was to have found unlimited fulfillment with the complete realization of the image of God.”¹³ So expect, as C.S Lewis said, to be surprised by joy.¹⁴

Another characteristic that may be seen in our life on the road of theosis is humility. In fact, though we may be growing more and more like Christ, at the same time we are likely to become more and more aware of the sin in our own life. “Deification, always presupposes a continued act of repentance. A saint may be well advanced in the way of holiness, yet he or she does not therefore cease to employ the words of the Jesus Prayer, ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.’”¹⁵ The Philokalia speaks over and over again regarding repentance. Not only is it essential for beginning the journey of theosis, it is also a characteristic of one who has become progressively deified.

Finally, another sign of theosis is love for one’s neighbor. Sometimes we have the idea that the ‘religious’ person is extremely solitary and isolated, such as the desert fathers and monks. While that is a side of the life that pursues theosis, it is by no means the entire picture. In fact, it is only a small portion of true, orthodox theosis.

¹² Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 236.

¹³ Stavropoulos, *Eastern Orthodox Theology*, 186.

¹⁴ Clive S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of my Early Life*. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955).

¹⁵ Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 136.

“When we think of deification we must think of the Hesychasts praying in silence and of St. Seraphim with his face transfigured; but we must think also of St. Basil caring for the sick in the hospital at Caesarea, of St. John the Almsgiver helping the poor at Alexandria, of St. Sergius in his filthy clothing, working as a peasant in the kitchen garden to provide the guests of the monastery with food. These are not two different ways, but one.”¹⁶

In the Philokalia, and throughout the writings of the early church fathers, it is naturally assumed that true theosis should be clearly evidenced in the life of the believer. On this path of theosis, the farther that we travel, our lives should be more about helping others, loving others, and like Jesus, we should be more self-sacrificing. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit, by His grace alone, that our lives become more and more Christ-like. Christ in us, the hope of Glory!¹⁷

So as we embark on this journey together, let’s walk forward with openness to the Spirit and a willingness to put into action the teachings of Scripture and the fathers. After 28 days, we will expect together to be more joyful, more humble, and more loving in our actions towards others.

See you tomorrow morning.

¹⁶ Ibid., 237.

¹⁷ Colossians 1:27

Day 1

Repentance

Today's Reading



- ∞ “I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery.
- ∞ “You must not have any other god but me.
- ∞ “You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands.
- ∞ “You must not misuse the name of the LORD your God. The LORD will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.
- ∞ “Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.
- ∞ “Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.
- ∞ “You must not murder.
- ∞ “You must not commit adultery.
- ∞ “You must not steal.
- ∞ “You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.
- ∞ “You must not covet your neighbor’s house. You must not covet your neighbor’s wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.”

Practical Application

Ask the Lord to prepare your heart for the next few days of repentance. Imagine your heart is white, with some dark spots. What are the dark spots that cover the white heart? If anything comes to mind today write it down here and confess it to God.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 2

Today's Reading¹⁸

[Repentance]



Until a man is completely changed by repentance, he will be wise
always to remember his sins with sorrow and to recall the eternal fire
that they justly deserve.

2 EVAGRIOS THE SOLITARY I, ON PRAYER, SEC. 144



¹⁸ Smith, *Philokalia*, 2.

Practical Application

Ask God to give you a sorrow for your sin. Spend time thinking about the eternal fire that they justly deserve. Write any thoughts you may have.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 3

Today's Reading

Repentance



When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, 21 envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:19-21



Practical Application

Confession is not only to be done privately to the Lord, but also to others that we have offended with our sin. Think of some names of people you have sinned against. Write them down here. Go to someone today that your sin has affected and ask them to forgive you. If you are unable to do this, ask God to give you strength and courage to do this at least once during the 28-day program.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 4

Repentance

Today's Reading¹⁹



Sometimes the flow of tears produces an acrid and painful feeling in the heart's organ of spiritual perception; sometimes it induces delight and a sense of jubilation. Thus, when through repentance we are in the process of cleansing ourselves from the poison and stain of sin and, enkindled by divine fire, hot tears of repentance flow from us, and when our conscience is, as it were, smitten by the heart's anguish, then we experience this acrid feeling and painfulness both spiritually and perceptibly. But when we have been largely cleansed by such tears and have attained freedom from the passions, then—refreshed by the Divine Spirit, our heart pure and tranquil—we are filled with inexpressible tenderness and delight by the joyous tears provoked by compunction.

NIKITAS STITHATOS 24

IV, ON THE PRACTICE OF THE VIRTUES: ONE HUNDRED TEXTS, SEC. 69



¹⁹ Smith, *Philokalia*, 20.

Practical Application

Are there any dark spots on your heart still left? Methodically think through every area of your life: friends, family, work, God, society. If anything comes to mind confess these sins to God. Let the peace of God come and fill your heart, let the joy of God come in the freedom of confession and forgiveness. Spend time thanking God for His grace in your life.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 5

Today's Reading

The Heart



Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the LORD all the day.

Proverbs 23:17



Practical Application

Be aware of your heart today. Notice your heart's inclinations of envy and discontent.

Confess those things and ask for the fear of the Lord.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 6

Today's Reading²⁰

The Heart



I entreat you not to leave your heart unguarded, as long as you are in the body. Just as a farmer cannot feel confident about the crop growing in his fields, because he does not know what will happen to it before it is stored away in his granary, so a man should not leave his heart unguarded as long as he still has breath in his nostrils. Up to his last breath he cannot know what passion will attack him; as long as he breathes, therefore, he must not leave his heart unguarded, but should at every moment pray to God for his help and mercy.

ST. ISAIAH THE SOLITARY I, ON GUARDING THE INTELLECT,
SEC. 15



²⁰ Smith, *Philokalia*, 32.

Practical Application

Set your watch or cell phone alarm for every hour today. On the hour take time to pray and ask God for help and mercy to guard your heart from the sinful passions that may attack you throughout the day.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 7

Today's Reading

The Heart



And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:7 *ESV*



Practical Application

Draw a picture of a heart and the word *mind*. Write the word peace around it over and over until it is all encircled. Now pray and ask God to give you that peace in Christ Jesus, and thank Him that He promises to do so in His word.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 8

Today's Reading²¹

The Heart



It is for this reason that the Savior says, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8): for he is hidden in the hearts of those who believe in him. They shall see him and the riches that are in him when they have purified themselves through love and self-control; and the greater their purity, the more they will see.

ST. MAXIMOS THE CONFESSOR

II, FOURTH CENTURY ON LOVE, SEC. 72



²¹ Smith, *Philokalia*, 51.

Practical Application

Do you want to see God? Ask God to purify you through his love and self-control in your heart. Is there an area where you lack self-control? Pray and ask God to show you how love can affect this area. Write down anything that comes to mind.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 9

Prayer

Today's Reading



Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

Jesus said, “This is how you should pray:

Father, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. Give us each day the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation.”

Luke 11:1–4 NLT



Practical Application

Slowly pray through each line of the Lord's Prayer, either in the version written here or in the version you prefer. Add your own words after each phrase of the prayer Jesus taught us to pray.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 10

Today's Reading²²

Prayer



If you desire to pray as you ought, do not grieve anyone; otherwise you “run in vain” (Philippians 2:16). “Leave your gift before the altar; first go away and be reconciled with your brother” (Matthew 5:24), and when you return you will pray without disturbance. For rancor darkens the intellect of one who prays, and extinguishes the light of his prayers.

EVAGRIOS THE SOLITARY I, ON PRAYER, SEC. 21–22



²² Smith, *Philokalia*, 70.

Practical Application

Is there anger in your heart towards someone? Ask God to reveal this to you. If you want to be able to pray for yourself and others you need to make this right today.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 11

Today's Reading

Prayer



But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Matthew 5:44 *ESV*



Practical Application

Is there anyone you have difficulty loving? Are you persecuted by anyone? Any groups of people in the world that you would describe as an 'enemy?' Pray for them today.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 12

Today's Reading²³



Especially important is pure prayer—prayer that is unceasing and uninterrupted. Such prayer is a safe fortress, a sheltered harbor, a protector of virtues, a destroyer of passions. It brings vigor to the soul, purifies the intellect, gives rest to those who suffer, consoles those who mourn. Prayer is converse with God, contemplation of the invisible, the angelic mode of life, a stimulus toward the Divine, the assurance of things longed for, “making real the things for which we hope” (Hebrews 11:1). As an ascetic you must embrace this queen of the virtues with all your strength. Pray day and night. Pray at times of dejection and at times of exhilaration. Pray with fear and trembling, with a watchful and vigilant mind, so that prayer may be accepted by the Lord. For, as the psalmist says: “The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer” (Psalm 34:15).

ST. THEODOROS THE GREAT ASCETIC II, A CENTURY OF SPIRITUAL
TEXTS, SEC. 60



²³ Smith, *Philokalia*, 78.

Practical Application

Ask God to help you increase your prayer life. Write down 10 different people or events that you can pray for and spend time right now praying through each item.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 13

Today's Reading

The Jesus Prayer

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.”



And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Acts 2:21 *ESV*



Practical Application

Repeat the Jesus Prayer five times slowly, thinking about each phrase.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 14

Today's Reading²⁴

The Jesus Prayer

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.”



Authentic prayer—the warmth that accompanies the Jesus Prayer, for it is Jesus who enkindles fire on the earth of our hearts (Luke 12:49)—consumes the passions like thorns and fills the soul with delight and joyfulness. Such prayer comes neither from right nor left, nor from above, but wells up in the heart like a spring of water from the life-quickenning Spirit. It is this prayer alone that you should aspire to realize and possess in your heart, always keeping your intellect free from images, concepts, and thoughts. And do not be afraid, for he who says, “Take heart; it is I; be not afraid” (Matthew 14:27), is with us—he whom we seek and who protects us always. When we invoke God we must be neither timid nor hesitant.

ST. GREGORY OF SINAI IV, ON PRAYER, SEC. 7



²⁴ Smith, *Philokalia*, 119.

Practical Application

Set your watch or cell phone alarm for every hour today. On the hour repeat the Jesus Prayer in your heart, or if possible aloud, 5 times.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 15

Today's Reading

The Jesus Prayer

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.”



And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:17 *ESV*



Practical Application

Make a list of everything that you have to do today. Once you are finished re-read your list and pray the Jesus prayer after each item.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 16

Today's Reading²⁵

The Jesus Prayer

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.”



Pay strict attention to your heart and watch over it, so that it does not give admittance to your thoughts that are evil or in any way vain and useless.

Without interruption, whether asleep or awake, eating, drinking, or in company, let your heart inwardly and mentally at times be meditating on the Psalms, at other times be repeating the prayer, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.” And when you chant, make sure that your mouth is not saying one thing while your mind is thinking about another.

ABBA PHILIMON II, A DISCOURSE ON ABBA PHILIMON, SEC. 11



²⁵ Smith, *Philokalia*, 112.

Practical Application

Repeat the Jesus Prayer aloud slowly for at least 10 minutes, asking God to protect your thoughts while you meditate on the mercy of God. Think of the cross, of your sin, of the teaching and work of Jesus.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 17

The Passions

Today's Reading



So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.

Galatians 5:16–26

Practical Application

Slowly read through this longer passage of scripture two more times. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you today and obey when He speaks.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 18

Today's Reading²⁶



These eight passions should be destroyed as follows: gluttony by self-control; unchastity by desire for God and longing for the blessings held in store; avarice by compassion for the poor; anger by goodwill and love for all men; worldly dejection by spiritual joy; listlessness by patience, perseverance, and offering thanks to God; self-esteem by doing good in secret and by praying constantly with a contrite heart; and pride by not judging or despising anyone in the manner of the boastful Pharisee (Luke 18:11–12), and by considering oneself the least of all men. When the intellect has been freed in this way from the passions we have described and been raised up to God, it will henceforth lead the life of blessedness, receiving the pledge of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22). And when it departs this life, dispassionate and full of true knowledge, it will stand before the light of the Holy Trinity and with the divine angels will shine in glory through all eternity.

ST. JOHN OF DAMASKOS II, ON THE VIRTUES AND THE VICIES



²⁶ Smith, *Philokalia*, 115.

Practical Application

Choose one of the following passions to focus on overcoming today: gluttony, unchastity, avarice, anger, worldly dejection, listlessness, self-esteem, pride. What does St. John of Damaskos say will destroy that passion? How can you focus on that today? Ask God to give you concrete a concrete action.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 19

Today's Reading

The Passions



Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.

Galatians 5:24–26



Practical Application

Ask the Holy Spirit for ways to encourage three other people today. Thank God for what he has given others as you go through your day.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 20

Today's Reading²⁷

The Passions



Silence the man who utters slander in your hearing. Otherwise, you sin twice over: first, you accustom yourself to this deadly passion and, second, you fail to prevent him from gossiping against his neighbor.

ST. MAXIMOS THE CONFESSOR II, *FIRST CENTURY ON LOVE*, SEC. 60



²⁷ Smith, *Philokalia*, 141.

Practical Application

Watch yourself today to ensure you do not gossip about others, and do not let others gossip around you. Make a plan what you will say to excuse yourself from the situation, or how you will confront someone in a loving way. Ask the Holy Spirit for help with this.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 21

Today's Reading

Stillness



“Go out and stand before me on the mountain,” the LORD told him. And as Elijah stood there, the LORD passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And a voice said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

1 Kings 19:11–13



Practical Application

Ask God to quiet your thoughts. Sit in silence for ten minutes. At the end of the ten minutes ask God if He has anything he wants to whisper to you.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 22

Today's Reading²⁸

Stillness



Christ is the capstone (Ephesians 2:20) uniting us with himself. He is the pearl of great price (Matthew 13:46): it is this the monk seeks when he plunges into the depths of stillness and it is this for which he sells all his own desires through obedience to the commandments, so that he may acquire it even in this life.

ST. GREGORY OF SINAI IV, ON COMMANDMENTS AND
DOCTRINES, SEC. 83



²⁸ Smith, *Philokalia*, 184.

Practical Application

Ask Christ to unite Himself with you and then sit in silence for 10 minutes. Find three other times throughout your day to sit in 5-10 minutes of silence.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 23

Today's Reading

Stillness



“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!”

Psalm 46:10 *ESV*



Practical Application

As you sit in stillness for 10 minutes try to imagine what it will look like as God is exalted among the nations.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 24

Today's Reading²⁹

Stillness



When we receive visits from our brethren, we should not consider this an irksome interruption of our stillness, lest we cut ourselves off from the law of love. Nor should we receive them as if we were doing them a favor, but rather as if it is we ourselves who were receiving a favor; and because we are indebted to them, we should beg them cheerfully to enjoy our hospitality, as the patriarch Abraham has shown us. This is why St. John, too, says: “My children, let us love not in word or tongue, but in action and truth. And by this we know that we belong to the truth” (1 John 3:18–19).

ST. THEODOROS THE GREAT ASCETIC II, *A CENTURY OF SPIRITUAL TEXTS*, SEC.

84



²⁹ Smith, *Philokalia*, 170.

Practical Application

Make a plan to incorporate more stillness in your day today, but look for opportunities to show hospitality to others as well.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 25

Today's Reading

Theosis



By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

2 Peter 1:3-4



Practical Application

Imagine God filling up a suitcase filled with everything you need to live a godly life. Write down what you think he has put in that suitcase. Afterwards imagine God giving that suitcase to you, and thank him for it. Live today in the knowledge that you have everything you need to live a godly life.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 26

Today's Reading³⁰

Theosis



When we were in this harsh captivity, ruled by invisible and bitter death, the Master of all visible and invisible creation was not ashamed to humble himself and to take upon himself our human nature, subject as it was to the passions of shame and desire and condemned by divine judgment; and he became like us in all things except that he was without sin (Hebrews 4:15), that is, without ignoble passions. All the penalties imposed by divine judgment upon man for the sin of the first transgression—death, toil, hunger, thirst, and the like—he took upon himself, becoming what we are, so that we might become what he is. The Logos became man, so that man might become Logos. Being rich, he became poor for our sake, so that through his poverty we might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). In his great love for man he became like us, so that through every virtue we might become like him.

ST. MARK THE ASCETIC I, LETTER TO NICOLAS THE SOLITARY



³⁰ Smith, *Philokalia*, 191.

Practical Application

St. Athanasius said, “God became man, that man might become god.” While we are not God in the Divine essence, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Take time to thank God that he dwells within you and that he *is* changing you to be more and more a reflection of His glory in the world.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 27

Today's Reading

Theosis



This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

2 Corinthians 5:17



Practical Application

If you have died with Christ, and risen again as a new creation with a new life, ask God what that new life should look like practically in your life. Record what He says.

Evening Meditation

What were some significant thoughts, events or feelings that occurred throughout the day in reference to the reading of the morning?

Day 28

Today's Reading³¹



For according to St. Basil, “Spirit-bearing souls, when illumined by the Spirit, both become spiritual themselves and shed forth grace upon others. From this comes foreknowledge of things future, understanding of mysteries, apprehension of things hidden, distribution of spiritual gifts, citizenship in heaven, the dance with the angels, unending joy, divine largesse, likeness to God, and the desire of all desires, to become god.”

ST. GREGORY PALAMAS IV, TOPICS OF NATURAL AND THEOLOGICAL SCIENCE AND ON THE MORAL AND ASCETIC LIFE, SEC. 76



³¹ Smith, *Philokalia*, 216

Practical Application

This excerpt gives a great description of the beauty of being entirely filled with the Holy Spirit. Read through his list several times. What area would you like to become more real in your life? On this last day ask God to make you more like him, to make his glory resonate in your entire being, to be a ‘Spirit bearing soul.’

Evening Meditation and Conclusion

You are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This is how God dwells with us in the present; through people who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. So let us live in that knowledge and power. Let us also look forward to what is coming.

I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”

I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light. The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the world will enter the city in all their glory. Its gates will never be closed at the end of day because there is no night there.

Revelation 21:3-4, 22-25 ESV

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Appendix 2. Recruiting Text

Recruiting Text Posted on September 9, 2016. This was posted on a personal website (www.benandang.com) and referenced on Facebook:

Looking for help from Canadian Evangelicals

This past year I have been working on my thesis for my Master's Degree in Biblical Studies. It has been a really fun thesis as I have been studying the early church fathers and how their writings can be helpful and more applicable to evangelical Christians.

I'm looking for people who would be willing to help me with the research portion of the thesis. It would be a bit of a commitment (15-20 minutes a day for 28 days) so consider carefully if you could participate, but I believe it will also add value to your spiritual life. It could be a major turning point in your life!...or maybe not. That is why it is research.

Here is what helping looks like:

First, you will fill out a short 5 -10 question survey (just marking a number for each question).

Second, I will mail you a 28-day devotional booklet. When you receive it you will need to spend 10-15 minutes every morning doing a 'devotional' A short reading, 5 minutes to think and pray, and then sometimes there might be a small spiritual 'practice' like writing something down, praying something specific etc. Finally at the end of the day you would need to take 5 minutes to answer a question in the booklet.

Third, at the end of the 28-days I will ask you to fill in another very short survey.

If you are willing to help me (I need about 60 volunteers) I would really appreciate it! If you know anyone else that is a Canadian and would agree that they are an evangelical Christian I am open to anyone participating in this research project. If you are interested and

able to help- please email me before September 13. I would love to get these booklets in the mail and have people started by October. My thesis deadline is the end of the year.

Appendix 3. Survey Text

Thank you for participating in this short survey related to your Christian life. Please do not think too long about your answers, simply fill in the answer or move the slider to the point that feels appropriate for you. This survey is completely confidential. No names will be recorded.

* 1. In general, how much do you enjoy singing worship songs?

I dislike singing worship songs

I really enjoy singing worship songs

Continuum from 1-100

* 2. In the average week, how frequently do you read your Bible?

0 times.

1-2 times.

3-4 times.

5-6 times.

Daily.

* 3. During the average day, how aware are you of the presence of God in your life?

I don't sense the presence of God at all.

I deeply sense the presence of God.

Continuum 1-100

* 4. Would you consider yourself a part of a local body of believers?

Yes No

* 5. About how many times in the average month do you attend a worship service at a local church?

0

1-2

3-4

5-6

7-8

9-10

More than 10 times.

* 6. In general, do you enjoy reading the Bible?

Not at all Absolutely love it

Continuum 1-100

* 7. Do you volunteer in any extra ministry roles in a local church?

Yes No

* 8. Do you have hope for your future growth as a Christian?

Yes, I have a clear hope for future growth.

Yes, I am partly hopeful.

I'm not sure.

No, I can't really see how I will grow.

No, I have no hope for growth.

* 9. How old are you?

18-30

31-40

41-50

51-60

Older than 60

Appendix 4. Raw Data from Surveys

Group A- Theosis Program, Group B- Daily Quiet Time

Enjoy singing worship songs				Frequently you read your Bible				Aware of the presence of God				In general do you enjoy reading the Bible?				Hope for future growth as a Christian				Age Group	
Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest		A	B
A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
95	95	100	100	0	0	0	1-2	100	75	80	90	30	66	33	90	yes	yes	yes	yes	Age 31-40	Age 18-30
90	60	99	99	1-2	0	1-2	1-2	65	60	70	81	80	100	50	99	yes	yes	yes	yes	Age 31-40	Age 18-30
100	100	100	92	1-2	1-2	1-2	3-4	86	95	80	56	75	63	100	55	yes	yes	yes	yes	Age 31-40	Age 18-30
90	100	100	60	1-2	1-2	1-2	3-4	75	75	59	70	80	66	95	90	yes	yes	yes	yes	Age 31-40	Age 18-30
82	100	100	95	1-2	1-2	3-4	3-4	40	90	67	51	36	90	63	70	yes	yes	yes	yes	Age 31-40	Age 18-30
100	100	73	45	1-2	1-2	3-4	5-6	54	83	43	45	100	100	80	50	yes	yes	yes	yes	Age 31-40	Age 18-30
100	100	90	50	1-2	1-2	3-4	5-6	75	71	95	33	80	70	100	75	yes	yes	yes	yes	Age 31-40	Age 18-30
100	100	100	100	1-2	1-2	3-4	5-6	59	100	70	35	96	94	95	50	yes	yes	yes	yes	Age 31-40	Age 31-40
78	94	100	50	1-2	1-2	3-4	5-6	85	70	53	50	95	74	93	100	yes	yes	yes	yes	Age 31-40	Age 31-40
100	99	50	86	1-2	1-2	3-4	5-6	34	71	17	83	50	56	47	86	yes	yes	yes	yes	Age 31-40	Age 31-40
100	95	100	100	3-4	1-2	5-6	Daily	91	62	31	100	100	64	76	100	yes	yes	yes	yes	Age 31-40	Age 31-40
52	70	99	93	3-4	3-4	5-6	Daily	0	50	99	81	38	100	99	59	yes	yes	yes	yes	Age 31-40	Age 31-40
100	90	100	72	3-4	3-4	5-6	Daily	100	70	90	73	97	75	90	88	yes	yes	yes	partly	Age 31-40	Age 31-40
83	65	100	99	3-4	3-4	5-6	Daily	76	40	73	66	78	50	44	63	yes	yes	partly	partly	Age 31-40	Age 31-40
100	90	100	90	3-4	3-4	Daily	Daily	80	60	100	60	51	100	100	75	partly	yes	partly	partly	Age 41-50	Age 31-40
95	90	95	96	3-4	5-6	Daily	Daily	75	60	95	51	50	100	70	50	partly	yes	partly	Not sure	Age 51-60	Age 31-40
90	74	93		5-6	5-6	Daily		73	61	87		80	80	93		partly	yes	partly	No not really	Age 51-60	Age 31-40
100	90	85		5-6	5-6	Daily		100	25	75		100	50	90		partly	Partly	not sure		Older than 60	Age 41-50
95	100			Daily	Daily			50	74			60	66			partly	Partly			Older than 60	Age 41-50
70	70			Daily	Daily			30	25			85	30			partly	Partly			Older than 60	Age 41-50
83	70			Daily	Daily			30	25			30	80			partly	Not sure			Older than 60	Age 51-60
	100			Daily				100				100					Not sure				Older than 60
	92			Daily				65				80					Not sure				Older than 60

How would you describe your journey over the past 28 days?	In what way, if any has your participation made a difference for you?
Posttest	Posttest

Group A	Group B	Group A	Group B
It was very helpful to me. At first I didn't feel the usefulness but as I progressed it felt as though He was laying down for me what I needed to do ahead of time. Close to the end of the study it became real and very helpful.	My experience in the last 28 days had been good. I have felt spiritual growth but of course some days greater than others. The most helpful thing was to review the morning devotion in the evening. This helped me to remember and solidify what I had learned. I think I may even begin using note cards to carry with me throughout the day so I can remind myself of my morning reading at various times of the day. I have been able to retain more using this technique.	It helped me to reopen my heart, organize and prioritize my thoughts. It came at a very timely moment in my life. I will pass it on.	It has made a difference for me in that I have retained more knowledge but also remember better what that day's reading meant to me and what action is required by it.
Very good. It was nice to have something set to study and do. I failed miserably during the "Stillness" section. :) I greatly appreciated the days where I was told to set my timer every hour or two to reflect on the morning passage. That is a practice I want to continue to do.	Very fulfilling	It made me more disciplined to take time/make time for my devotions. It gave me reminders throughout the day on things to reflect upon which helped me feel like I was/am living an active faith with an active God.	The evening reflection has been a wonderful tool for my spiritual growth
It was great to begin my day thinking and praying about the different things. And it helped throughout the day to remind me of God's presence but also of how I am acting/ living according to his will.	Hard to maintain the discipline. Incomplete in finishing my task.	I have really seen the benefit of taking time every morning. It has also helped me see the areas in my life that really need to change.	It has added stress to my mornings.
Refreshing to be reminded of how powerful yet simple it is to lean into Truth.	In returning to daily prayer and meditation, I more clearly saw the direction of God, and his working in my day to day life.	Got me excited again about using my imagination and actively participating in acts that remind me of my connection to God.	I've been reminded of the need to return to God daily. I've tasted the power that can have in how it refocuses my life on Christ. This needs to be an area I continue to grow in.
It has helped me slow down and listen to what God is saying. It has been a challenge to complete but it was worth it.	Nothing has changed.	it has been good to read the writings of different faith fathers and to consider what they say. It has made me consider be more still and listen to what God is saying.	N/A
It was peace-giving to have clear parameters for the accepted level of spiritual disciplines. There were quite a few insightful thoughts and practices that brought energy to my day.	Consistent but uneventful. There was no grand moment of clarity and warm fuzzies, but I'm excited that I consistently dove into the Word.	My enthusiasm to read God's Word for myself every day has increased. However, I should note that I am no more inclined to read ancient Church fathers (or mothers). (I found as much confusion as insight from their writings.)	I was intentional about reading my Bible and felt guilty if I forgot or was late. I generally didn't read it before this.
I have loved the focus it has brought me for searching my own heart, being still before God, and bringing prayer more into focus throughout my day. It has reminded me of my standing with God: seeing my sin and desperation, but knowing His grace and desire to make me like Him.	Difficult and unexpected	It has realigned my universe...seeing God for who He is and me for who I am in relation to Him. He doesn't revolve around me, rather me around Him. I know this but needed a refocus.	It hasn't
it sure opened my eyes & heart to some areas of my life that I need to focus on & change.	It was a learning experience. The devotional I chose to do is called "Sassy, Single and Satisfied", it wasn't really about romantic relationships but mostly about your relationship with God and it has given me a lot to think and improve on. It has helped me see where I am lacking and need improvement. I have been reading my bible in conjunction with the devotional and it's been fun and enlightening, because there are things that I either didn't remember or are different from what I remember.	It has helped me to try and spend 10 - 15 minutes a night waiting on hearing from the Lord and some times in the morning and has helped me pray Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God have mercy on me when I get upset or have angry thoughts in my head. I repeat until I am calm again.	I have found that when I take the time to do devotionals in the morning, my temper doesn't flare quite as much. I feel calmer.

I have felt buoyed in my faith by remembering the deep history of the Christian faith. I have felt encouraged by the timeless messages. I have seen how the morning meditations echo through my day and keep me focused on Godly things.	Nothing really has changed from before	I have felt encouraged in my pursuit of growth, and have such respect for the number of people who have come before me - following Jesus and seeking to reflect Him to the world. I have felt like I am in good company and that is so encouraging.	It hasn't really, nothing changed
good to get in the habit of doing devotions in the morning	A good challenge for me to be consistent. I noticed more patience with my children these last 28 days.	it's gotten me into the habit of waking up a little earlier and reading a devotion first thing in the morning	Like I said more patience with my children is my biggest notice.
Hopeful	I did a prayer challenge praying scripture for five people to become saved. I looked forward to it everyday. I asked for glimpses of hope and received them when I needed them.	Made me more aware of God	It has made me take God at his word when he says something. It gave me persistence like the widow begging the judge. God spoke to me saying his timing is not mine. It showed me the importance of binding the enemy when praying for someone's soul so their eyes would be opened. It gave me a new love for praying scripture.
It was fulfilling and made me even more aware of the presence of God and filled with the Holy Spirit within my soul.	Focussing! It was nice to have that focus. I did a study on joy and deliberately chose joy throughout the month, even when there was loss and tremendous stress.	It has helped me see the presence of God in so many more ways and fills my soul with so much more empathy towards everyone. Also helped me clear my thoughts about what people do towards me and forgive them and just move on and look at the good side of things.	The proof that doing a devotion at the start of my day is a mindful practice that can set the tone for the day.
It has helped me to be more disciplined in my study of God and it has helped me to feel more joy and peace on an average day. I feel like I have been able to focus more on the real purpose of life throughout what would normally be a mundane, normal day.	Challenging to try to keep up with quite times twice a day	I feel like it has made me more aware of God in my daily life and it has also helped me to anticipate God more in my life. It has helped me to draw closer to God through a more focused and practiced meditation on Him.	gave me additional motivation to have regular quite times
It was a good experience. It made me realize i need to be in God's word more.	I enjoyed having this sense of accountability to spend time with God every morning and evening	It has encouraged me to draw closer to God. I need God in every area of my life. It made examine what I believe .	I believe it has helped me to become more disciplined and I feel God's presence throughout the day more clearly.
I enjoyed the devotional but found that some did not apply. Overall, about 40% of the material was useful. I would have preferred more biblical references than doctrinal quotes.	It has been really helpful to spend time with God each day for 28 days. It hasn't been something I always prioritized in the past, and I can see how it has helped me in my life and in my ministry.	Helped me to redirect some of my prayer targets.	My participation has shown me how important it is to spend time with God each day, reading the Word and praying. I've felt calmer and better able to handle difficult situations that have come, and I've had more peace in general.

<p>I have enjoyed the different readings and some of the exercises really got me thinking.</p>	<p>In all honesty it was great in the beginning, but I felt by the end that it was a chore and look forward to continuing my time with God in a way that's not part of a study.</p>	<p>Overall I enjoyed the extra nudgings. I particularly liked setting my phone alarm every hour. In our business throughout a day it brought back to him, even if just for a moment or two. I think this would be a good teaching tool for practicing him back into ones life throughout the day. I t also taught me again how nice it is to come to a quiet time with him everyday.</p>	<p>I don't see it as making a difference.</p>
<p>It was very timely with my other ministry commitments. It definitely took me deeper in my walk with God.</p>		<p>I am more aware of God's presence in my life and I think the last 28 days have changed how I think about my alone time with God.</p>	
<p>It started off great. I was disciplined. I was able to see God's movement in my life and situation. When we came to the week on Stillness I really felt I had failed. I struggled to be still. I struggled with having time to make time. Then this last week I confessed I cannot be still I need to learn how to be still. Instead of feeling the rejection of the Holy Spirit I felt a blessing and my family received so much blessing. So though I personally struggle with stillness I feel that God is allowing me to grow in this area.</p>		<p>Reflecting at the end of the day has been helpful to see the hand of God throughout the day and thank Him.</p>	

