

SG 204

A Study of the Spiritual Direction of St. John Climacus

Course Credit: 3 Semester Hours

I. Course Description

This course is a study of the teachings of St. John Climacus (St. John of the Ladder) contained in that book he wrote which, next to the Holy Scriptures, is the most widely read of the whole Eastern Church. In this classic work, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, St. John sets forth thirty steps one may take in growth in Christ. This course examines those thirty steps in detail and leads the student along a path designed to help discern what they could come to mean in the life of a Christian who took them seriously.

II. At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- A. Understand better the writings of St. John Climacus and the monastic way of life.
- B. Gain some insights about how his instructions may be applied to one's personal, spiritual life.
- C. List the 30 steps of divine ascent listed in St. John's book
- D. Recite applicable Scripture verses from memory

III. Materials Needed

- A. *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, by St. John Climacus "The Classics of Western Spirituality Series," New York: Paulist Press, published 1982

- B. Orthodox Study Bible
- C. A Bible Concordance
- D. An English Dictionary

IV. Course Content

- Lesson I. St. John Climacus: The Man and His work
- Lesson II. Breaking With the World (Steps 1-3)
- Lesson III. The Fundamental Virtues (Steps 4-7)
- Lesson IV. Confronting Anger, Malice and Slander (Steps 8-10)
- Lesson V. Overcoming Talkativeness, Falsehood, Despondence (Steps 11-13)
- Lesson VI. The Material Passions (Steps 14-17)
- Lesson VII. Beating Insensitivity, Fear, Vanity and Pride (Steps 18-23)
- Lesson VIII. Virtues of the Higher Life (Steps 24-26)
- Lesson IX. Stillness and Prayer (Steps 27-28)
- Lesson X. Dispassion and Love (Steps 29-30)

V. Assignments

For each lesson, write 250-500 words in total for each assignment in each lesson, double-spaced. Each lesson will account for 10% of your grade. Faculty will give substantive commentary on all assignments.

Final exam details, if applicable, are explained in the virtual classroom content on moodle.com.

VI. Attendance

We do not have an official attendance policy due to the nature of being a self-paced course (faculty are expected to engage with each student at least once per week through moodle.com).

VII. Participation

All students must engage at least once per week in the asynchronous forum discussion group. Access is made available in the virtual classroom.