

## “Our own Jacob’s Ladder”

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For those of us living in America life is busy. We rush here, we rush there, and never seem to have enough time each day to get done what needs to be done. As we live such a life, it becomes easy to feel that each day is just a blur and quickly passing from us. It also easy to fall into a mindset where we live for the weekend and just want to get through the work week. This certainly is tragic, for the work week is five out of seven days of the week, it would indeed be sad to live for only two days of the week. There must be a better way.

Our Orthodox spirituality teaches us that we need to live in the present moment. Finally of course modern day psychology has discovered this and claims this concept as something new, calling it “mindfulness training”, when in fact it has been around for thousands of years. Nevertheless, this act, this mindset of living in the present moment, is something that can help us greatly in our own lives today. In fact, one reason why we feel that life passes us by so quickly is because we do not live in the present moment.

In the morning we are often thinking about what we have to do later in the day, in the afternoon we are often thinking of what we have to do in the evening, and in the evening we are thinking of the next day. As a result, we are never focused on what we are doing each given moment, our minds are not on what is before us each given moment. Life literally then passes us by because we are not living in the present moment, but rather in some future moment that has not yet arrived. The Lord tells us, “Do not worry about tomorrow, tomorrow will worry about its’ own things, sufficient for the day is its’ own trouble”. Bishop Kallistos Ware explains more when he writes, “Jacob’s ladder (the way to heaven) starts from the point where I am at this very moment; the gate of heaven is everywhere”.

Each present moment, what we are doing each present moment, no matter how small or seemingly meaningless, is important and a step toward our salvation. Even Ghandi, when asked what he does to get away or go on vacation, answered “I am always on vacation”. Vacation is a mindset, if we can stay focused on and mindful to whatever is before us, whoever is before us, and whatever we are doing each given moment, and be totally awake to where we are and what we are doing each given moment, then in all likelihood we would need less “vacations”. It seems hard to do this, especially in our complicated world today, but with mental practice, prayer, and God’s grace it can be done. Our life that God has given us is the here and now, each present moment, not some future moment that hasn’t occurred, it is time we start living life.