

## Week Twenty-seven

### YEAR ONE

#### Read

Amos  
Hosea  
Collins, Chapter 15, "Amos and Hosea," pages 153–63

#### Focus

Identify and describe behaviors or actions that upset Amos and Hosea and what they said about them. What was destructive in those actions? What could cause people or the prophets to become aware of the destructive aspects? When have you behaved in the same kind of way? What was the cost of that behavior? Compare and contrast your experience with the experience you identified in one of those prophetic books. How or when have you heard a "word of the Lord" that caused you to think again about your behavior? What actions in our contemporary world are similar to the destructive elements you identified in one of this week's prophetic books? What do you believe about the matter under reflection? Draw some conclusions that can direct you in your daily ministry.

### YEARTWO

#### Read

James  
Powell, Chapter 24, "James," pages 445–61

#### Focus

Notice what Powell has to say about the letter. What are the deep hungers of those to whom James writes?

### YEAR THREE

#### Read

MacCulloch, Chapter 20, "Protestant Awakenings," pages 716–65

#### Focus

Describe how learning about the "Protestant Awakenings" MacCulloch describes (especially pietism, Methodism, and the American Great Awakenings) contributes to vocational development and building a theology of mission.

## YEAR FOUR

### Read

Sedgwick, Chapter 5, “The Practices of Faith” and Chapter 6, “The Call of God,” and the Appendix, pages 103–58

### Focus

Record four or five ways in which Sedgwick’s writings contribute to building your theology. Take special notice of the way Schleiermacher has influenced contemporary theology.



## ALL YEARS

### Respond

Throughout this constructive theology unit, you have worked with various facets of building your own theology. Such work always is enriched when done within a learning community. Mark McIntosh, in *Mysteries of Faith*, noted three movements that a person or a community undergoes in building a life-giving theology: 1) seeing differently; 2) developing a habit of life; 3) ongoing conversation with God.<sup>31</sup>

Regularly practicing the discipline of theological reflection allows people to see things differently. Fresh visions, in turn, lead to developing a “habit of life.” Thinking theologically becomes routine. In McIntosh’s words, “Learning to see the mystery of God’s plan, to see in a way that illuminates the meaning of the world, requires you to develop some habits of mind and heart.”

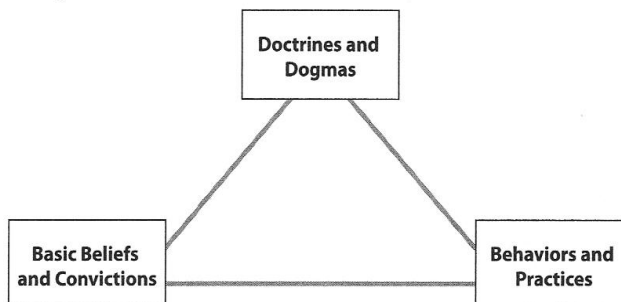
EfM presents opportunities to develop habits of mind and heart—ways of seeing God’s mystery and presence. He noted that “when theology becomes a habit, it becomes part of your character, a fundamental having and holding of who you are.” Theology opens a person to knowing about God and knowing God, and at the same time allows people to know more *about* themselves and, more importantly, to *know* themselves. The two-fold practice of knowing God and knowing oneself embodies the incarnational process. It is an interactive, dynamic, dance-like reality in which a person intentionally develops a “God-knowing” habit and simultaneously develops a *habitus* of self-knowing.

Review the work you have done throughout the unit and note what you have learned about yourself and about God. Assess where you are in the theological practice of knowing God and yourself.

31. McIntosh, *Mysteries of Faith*, 5–20.

**Practice**

Imagine the three points of a triangle. Each location represents a focus-point for constructing a theological system. One point locates Christian tradition conveyed through the language of doctrines and dogmas. A second point gathers a person's basic beliefs and convictions. The third point focuses on behavior and practices. The following figure illustrates the three-fold relationship:



From the work you did in the Respond section of Week Twenty-five, select four doctrines that interest you, for example, the doctrines of human nature, mission (*aka* missiology), sacramental theology, and the doctrine of last things (eschatology). Select one, such as human nature—“humans beings are created in the image of God.”

State in your own words what you believe about human nature, such as “I believe that people are innately good.” As a way to assess the intensity of the belief, rate it on a scale from one to ten, one representing a lightly held opinion; ten a strongly held conviction. Using the example, a person might rate the belief as an eight. As a way to extend the rating, offer a rationale for that rating. For example, “I cannot rate it a ‘ten’ because my belief cannot account for people whose attitude is filled with evil intent.”

Next, state a behavior and/or practice exemplifying the belief, such as, “Whenever I see a baby, I stop to talk with it and make silly faces to make the baby smile, but then I read an article about a parent deliberately harming a child and I feel pain at the nature of humankind.”

Complete the process for three or four doctrines, beliefs, and behaviors.

When you have finished, prayerfully review all that you have done in this unit and write about what you see, hear, feel, worry about, or hope.