

FP 101 Spiritual Formation



**Teacher Handbook
Nazarene Theological Institute
Church of the Nazarene**

--Note to teachers—

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FP 101 SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Diploma and Certificate Level

Syllabus

Professor

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I. Course Description

How should a minister lead a life of intimacy with God? This course responds to this basic question. It is important to understand that a life given in service according to God's calling requires a discipline in the spiritual life as much as in one's professional life.

II. Course Rationale

Narration

The apostle Paul in addressing the Ephesians defined the role of prophets, evangelists, ministers and teachers in these terms: ". . . the perfection of the saints (Eph 4:11-12). If the minister is assigned to the work of perfecting the saints, it is necessary to have a well-disciplined life. Ministers must lead believers in a way that teaches them how to be instructed by God's word that accomplishes each day a transformation of the heart. God's instruction breaks down the pride that sometimes arises from the education we receive through our family background or in school and university education. God remodels the Christian. He remakes the Christian and gives them a godly disposition only made possible through the spiritual disciplines, namely prayer, meditation, and intercession, study, fasting, etc. The minister must learn to submit themselves to the disciplines of a spiritual life and teach other believers how to do so.

Program Outcomes

The following program outcomes assigned to this module are identifiable competencies required of the student in this course.

CN 5 Knowledge of the biblical, theological, and practical implications of holiness doctrine when taught from a Wesleyan perspective

CN 10 knowledge of the basic theory and art of communication, especially that which concerns preaching and teaching

CP 4 the ability to teach the Word of God and make disciples that can make other disciples

CP 5 the ability to plan and lead worship services]

CP 13 the ability to organize and promote Christian education

CR 1 Ability to give value to Christian morality and how to apply this ethic to life.

CR 3 Ability to worship God by using personal and public means of grace.

CR 4 ability to allow Christ's character to form the attitudes and actions of one's daily life.

CR 12 Ability to exert self-control.

CR 13 Ability to live the experience of entire sanctification.

CX 2 Ability to understand the context within which he or she lives with objectivity

Course Outcomes

At the end of the course the student will be able to demonstrate the following goals:

1. Students must have a complete understanding of the key concept of spiritual formation and be able to communicate verbally and visually in a local church (CN 5; CR 13)
2. Students must have a life of prayer in order to assume the responsibilities of a pastor (CN 10+; CP 4+; CP 5+; CP 13+; CX 2)
3. Students must regularly meditate on God's Word as a regular part of their daily lives (CR 1, CR 3+; CR 4; CR 12)
4. Students must acquire the quality of an intercessor, pleading on behalf of the lost, sick, and the demon-possessed. (CN 5+; CR 4+; CX 2)
5. Students will find how to fast and pray and discover an aid in combatting excessive forms of appetite and covetousness. (CR 12; CX 2)
6. The student will be accountable for taking up the cross of Jesus as a disciple (CR1; CR 4).

The following sessions and exercises of this course offer the following percentages of the four Cs:

Content	25%
Competency	15%
Character	45%
Context	15%

III. Bibliographie

Tracy, Wesley, Dee Freeborn, Morris Weigelt, Janine Tartaglia-Metcalf. *The Upward Call*. Nazarene Publishing House, 1993.

Other suggested books for further learning†:

1. Richard Foster. *Celebration of Discipline*. 1998
2. Andrew Murray. *The Inner Life*. (1984)
4. Bible

Les auteurs du cours vont prendre leur présentation à partir d'autres livres, y compris

1. Ralph SHALLIS. *From Now On*. (2006)
2. Paul YONGGHI CHO. *La prière, clé du réveil*. Editions Vida (USA)
3. Jack W. Hayford, *Prayer is invading the impossible* (2002)

IV. Course Requirements and Evaluations

1. This course can be taught in English, French, or a local dialect in a one-week intensive or during one month with two or three meetings per week.
2. Class attendance, attention and participation are especially important – students must be present and on time. If two or more classes are missed, the student will be required to repeat the course.
3. Small group dynamics – Nothing is more important in this course than the small group work. The class members will be assigned to small groups of three or four students each. The group members will serve as study partners for many group explorations and discussion throughout the course. The small group will give a summary of every lesson and apply it to pastoral ministry at the end of every lesson (course outcome 1,3, & 4).
4. Each student should keep a notebook. Les exercices consistent, pour chaque étudiant, d'ouvrir un carnet et d'y inscrire au fil des cours son programme de prières quotidiennes, les différents éléments de sa méditation quotidienne, ses sujets d'intercession. Ce carnet sera soumis chaque semaine à l'évaluation du professeur (objectifs 2, 4)
5. The teacher will carefully observe the small groups, noting the competence of reports, balance of discussion and the achievement of assigned tasks. The results will be placed in a personal portfolio (see below) that will follow students in their progress through the course of study.
6. Students must bring a Bible to each class session.

7. The class exercises consist of scripture memorization, leading devotionals, organizing a special service (e.g. Wedding, Lord's Supper, etc.), and prayer sessions which include different elements of daily meditation and requests for intercessory prayer (course outcomes 2,4,6).
8. Students will be introduced to fasting and prayer as spiritual disciplines (course outcomes 4 & 5).
9. Each student will be asked to do a 15 minute presentation in class at the end of the course (course outcome 1)
10. There will be no examination.

V. Course Schedule

Session 1: Introduction; What Is a Disciple?

Session 2: Inner Transformation

Session 3: Walking with God

Session 4: Resources for the Walk—*Worship*

Session 5: Resources for the Walk—*Prayer, Meditation, Fasting*

Session 6: Companions for the Christian Journey

Session 7: Ways to Serve Others on the Journey

Appendix: Covenant of Christian Conduct

Personal Portfolio

Students will have a record of their progress, examples of work completed, course grades, and other important or notable information that will follow them through the course of study. A simple dossier maintained by the District Ministerial Studies Board or District Advisory Board will suffice.

Session 1a—Introduction

Instructions for Instructor:

- 1. Choose the student that will assist with taking attendance. Make sure you keep a list of all the students in attendance and their marks for the course. Be sure to collect the student fees.*
- 2. Prepare a short meditation that will introduce this lesson, and assign the other students meditations for all sessions of the course, according to the normal practice of the teaching center.*
- 3. Present this part of the lesson. After this first section, students will have assignments to accomplish.*

By accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior, we are all saved from our lives as sinners. That is a good thing and desirable for all. It is an act of grace and therefore it is a gift from God in his infinite love for us in Jesus Christ. In our church we say that the time of conversion is the first work of God's grace, and the solution to the problem of voluntary sins.

We recognize that the time of conversion involves divine initiative in salvation as well as human responsibility to receive His free gift of grace. As far as conversion is concerned, the first work of grace includes the human response of repentance as well as God's gracious forgiveness for sins we have committed. Thus, the direction of life changes with the help and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to turn sinners from their sins. Moreover human beings must believe God will meet His promises to forgive us. The hand of God will accomplish several goals. To better understand what He will do in the lives of sinners converted to Christ, we are going to explain these terms in everyday language.

- **Regeneration.** This word means to give life to something that was dead. Because of our sins, we were spiritually dead, without a relationship with God beyond the fear of him. At conversion, God acts in us so that we breath in His new life at last to live again spiritually as well as physically. Jesus used the illustration of the seed, saying that the seed must be buried, and die before the new plant can grow full of life. Jesus also used the image of the new birth. We are all born to our mother, but thanks to the Christ's salvation, believers were born again by faith through the grace and the power of God.
- **Justification.** The Justification. Our sins are offenses against one or more laws of God. We are guilty and liable to punishment. In using the word "justification" the Bible means to say that when God justifies us, we are no longer guilty and we are free of any conviction resulting from our sins because of the death of Jesus on the cross.
- **Adoption.** The Bible uses the image of the adoption of talk about the new relationship between God and believers—we are members of His family, sons and daughters of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ and to each other. Adoption in the time of Jesus was to ensure that all the heirs will benefit from the father's legacy. God has a heritage of grace and good gifts to be given to all the peoples of the

earth. We engage in kingdom work, as his sons and daughters, so that we might share His grace with all those around us according to His will.

As a child of God, I am called to keep growing. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14: 6). Anyone who grows up is called an adult, well disciplined, well-educated, it is the joy of the Father.

After the conversion, new believers are renewed and cleansed to the point that they are ready to serve God and grow in the image of God. But sooner or later, new converts recognize that something is still wrong, something is blocking their spiritual progress. There is a desire to compromise his faith, to keep personal interests in his service to his Father. This is the inward sin, in which the believer is guilty. He finds that God must do something deeper in his life, a second work of grace. The Bible uses several expressions to present describe this work of God. One of them is entire sanctification (1 Thess. 5.23), another is "the baptism of the Holy Spirit." By this phrase, "Baptism of the Holy Spirit," we mean one is sanctified, purified from inward sin, and capable of good works as a fruit of the Holy Spirit in us. Again, for this work of grace to take place, there are human responsibilities to complement God's initiative. The role of the believer is to recognize one's weakness in the face of this sin problem and to devote one's entire life to God (see Rom. 12.1-2) with all one's desires and personal interests for the future, even in view of the scars of the past. God cleanses His heart of inward sin, and will fill one with the Holy Spirit, so that the believer can follow God's will, and follow after God's voice in the different circumstances of life. The basic value of spiritual formation is that relationship with God based upon his grace working to justify us and sanctify us into His image. The spiritual formation therefore is part of a dynamic relationship with God. The goal for spiritual formation is Christlikeness. The essence of the Wesleyan doctrine of holiness is at its base the restoration of the image of God in humanity made possible through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. **The purpose of spiritual formation is to bring the faithful into the image of Christ, until He transforms the hearts of believers (Gal.4: 9; Eph.4 :13-16).**

In the area of spirituality, we must grow and continue toward spiritual maturity. We are to be faithful to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Likewise, we must be imitators, his disciples living in spiritual discipline.

Additional instructions

Note in the course handbook, students must respond to two questions: What are the two works of grace? And, what is the purpose of spiritual formation? The answers to these questions are clear in the presentation that you just provided.

In the middle of page 8 in the student coursebook, there are memory verses - Romans 12.1-2 and Eph. 4.14-15. Take time to read them together, and begin the process of memorization. As an assignment for the next lesson, the student must know the context of the two passages. When you make students recite the verses, they must be able to explain them in context.

Before continuing the presentation, inform the students that they have specific obligations and personal spiritual responsibilities based on this presentation. For this part of the presentation, it is not the content that counts as much as the attitude that we should adopt.

Continue the presentation:

The goal of spiritual formation as progress toward the image of Christ, here is some advice in taking your first steps.

(1). Before studying this course in-depth, ask yourself: Do I really want to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ? If "yes" then take this course seriously. If no, it is not necessary to continue.

(2). At the end of this course, you will have a basic knowledge of how to be a disciple and how to make disciples of others. Look toward the horizon of your life, and discover where God wants you to be, and how you can be effective in your ministry for Him. Make a choice to grow spiritually as you imitate Christ.

(3). Do not approach this subject with haste. Take time to read the verses, especially Acts 2:42 and Acts 17:10-12. Approach each Bible reading in an attitude of prayer. Ask for God's blessing and listen for His voice in each aspect of the course. Meditate through journaling to think about how to apply the truths in daily life. This will also be a model for how to continue growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

(4). When you get together to study as a group, be a part of the group and not a spectator. The word for communion comes from the Greek "koinonia" meaning "share all things in common." Your spiritual growth depends on mutual encouragement. Learn to trust others, share spiritual truths with each other. Share what you have learned from God and from the living power of His word. You will grow in Christ and help them to hear His voice, too (1 Timothy 4:6-16).

Some key principles for practicing spiritual formation.

- Be a disciple. Prepare your heart to be a good follower of Christ. Read the Bible daily as well as regular prayer and fasting (Matthew 17:14-21).
- Make a commitment to God to be disciplined and obedient.
- Make a plan of action for what to accomplish as a disciple.
- Meet regularly in a small group of other disciples. In the NT, Jesus has a group of twelve disciples but a circle of three that are with Him in serious moments of revelation and growth: Peter, John, and James (Matthew 17:1-9). Some pastors work in total isolation. Church members may think their pastor is never sick, never has a need for more money or food. They go to the pastor for his help and encouragement, for prayer, and even for money thinking that he leads a perfectly flawless life. But, no one prays for him and family; no one encourages him. They are afraid to lavish him with their counsel. All pastors miss having someone to have confidence in and for receiving counsel and encouragement. We all need the support of a small group of friend and colleagues.

Before continuing with the course, work with the students on the assignments for this lesson. The first being the commitment to God. Explain the verses and the lesson content, even if they were in the presentation. Encourage the students to not

sign the document too quickly, but to reflect on what it means from now until the beginning of the next lesson. After making small group assignments, the students could stay in the same group until the end of the course. After signing the document, have them keep one half and give the other to the instructor.

The second assignment is to get into a group of three or four. They can remain in these groups throughout the course. This will encourage the group members to be honest with each other without protecting themselves from those they do not know too well.

Explain the activity 2-4 in the student handbook.

Session 1b: What is a disciple?

1. **Key Verses:** Students must read these passage before coming to class..

1 Peter 2.21-24

Luke 6.20

John 8.31-32

Colossians 3.16-17

2 Timothy 2.2

1 John 2.6

Assignment No. 1: Read and meditate on Ephesians 4:1-15. Ask the group to discuss what this passage brought to mind. (Later in this lesson, the groups will be working on this passage to prepare a series of Bible lessons: See instructions in the student handbook.)

Introduce some of the verses mentioned above, and let the students respond. Later, the groups will discuss them further.

Continue now with the following information:

2. Definition

The Greek word for "disciple is *mathétés*" which means "someone who learns (gets instruction) from another." A disciple is not only a **student** but also a **participant**. They were called to be

IMITATORS of their master.

Every Christian is called to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. This means they will follow Jesus Christ and put Him first in their lives no matter the cost (Matt. 6.33). Thus, a Christian discipleship is a person who is determined to follow Jesus Christ, with a desire to learn and to live by His example.

3. **The five basic principles of a Christian discipleship.** (Students must write these five principles in their notebook)

I. A disciple is a person who lives continuously by the word of God.

- Jesus is our Master. As disciples we must submit to his teaching with discipline and dedication. He will speak to us through the Holy Spirit. The point of discipleship is not inspiration, but formation (training, education, transformation).
- We need to place obedience to the word of God as the foundation for discipleship. Otherwise, we will be at the mercy of any emotion, any philosophy, any doctrine. . .

Illustration: Use the story of young Samuel as an example (see 1 Samuel 3.1-21)

II. A disciple completely dedicated his life to his Master.

This dedication should be total. Jesus Christ is totally dedicated to the Father and wants the same dedication on our part. One should trust Him at all stages as He takes our lives in order to shape according to His will (John 10.1-18, Mat. 6.33).

III. Christian is a disciple those who live in a relationship with Jesus Christ to produce fruit (John 15.4-5).

Wylon Moore wrote, "Our union with Christ makes possible a life through which others can be saved. When a Christian is filled with Christ, others can see, listen and are spiritually comforted in the kingdom of God. Thus, the new believers are part of discipleship. "Without bearing fruit in our lives, the kingdom of God is not expanding, and the body of Christ does not grow.

IV. A Christian disciple is the one who is dedicated to an unconditional love for and service to others (John 13:34-35).

This is not an ordinary love that expects something in return, but the unconditional love God has shown to us. The Greek word found in the New Testament for this kind of love is *agape*. This implies a relationship that seeks the well-being of the other and not a relationship based on how one receive from the other. The will of God and the well-being of others are more important than our own personal desires.

V. A disciple is the one who is dedicated to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ (Mat. 28:18-20).

The purpose of discipleship is to make disciples and not only converts. The converted can change their mind but the disciples follow their Master. That's why our way of using the JESUS Film includes follow-up. We do not want converts but disciples

4. A disciple is a privileged.

- They are called and chosen by God (Ephesians 1.4-5).
- Jesus Christ is the Savior; He died on the cross for the forgiveness of sins making them acceptable to God (Romans 5.6-9; 4.6-8).
- God is the Father with whom they have a personal relationship and so they are children of God and heirs to His kingdom (Galatians 4.6-7; Rom.8.15-17).
- They have the hope of eternal life (John 3.6).
- The Holy Spirit lives in them, giving them the strength to bear witness to their new life in Christ (Acts 1.8).
- They are at peace with God (Romans 5. 1).
- Nothing can be separate them from the love of God (Romans 8.35-39).

5. The disciple has a responsibility. Students must answer a question here.

"What would Jesus Christ do in such a situation?"

Those who take discipleship seriously will also need to respond to this question. This is a covenant or agreement that all Christians should have between themselves and Jesus (1 John 2.6).

In a perplexing situation, ask the Holy Spirit to show you what Jesus would do. We need His leadership, so that you do what will please God. As your knowledge of the teaching and actions of Jesus grows, and as you read the word of God in prayer, your ability to know what Jesus Christ will include most situations that you will experience.

I. Make a firm decision to follow Jesus.

- A true disciple needs to make a decision to do what Jesus would do in this case. This should not be an emotional response to the gospel, but an mature action and determination of the will.
- There will be times when you will need to comply with certain major decisions of your spiritual authorities. You do not have to be afraid to do what is right if you sincerely want God's will in your life (Rom. 8.15). A disciple is not acting independently, but it is even more accountable to God.

II. Some benefits of discipleship.

- There will be positive changes in your attitude towards people, money, business and social responsibilities.
- You will experience the refinement and of your life, so that your ideas, attitudes, and negative actions will conform to the mind of Christ.
- You will no longer act like a non-believer. It is therefore important confess our doubts and ask for His guidance and increase our faith.
- Love should govern our actions, words, and attitudes. We will become able to forgive, and have great compassion for those who are in need as well as for the lost.
- You will have the privilege of being the heir of God and heirs with Jesus Christ because you take part in His suffering (Romans 8.15-17). While obedience is costs much, even though God has promised to give us Himself (Luke 6.38; Jean 10.10; Mat.19.28-29 [30]).
- A positive change will take place in our old habits, because the Lord wants to see us be obedient. Resist the temptation to return to your old habits that may affect your grow as a disciple (Colossians 3.16-17, 23-25).
- Taking our discipleship seriously will lead us tol seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. You must be confident that God will keep his promise and will meet all our needs. This will give us the joy and peace of heart available through the Holy Spirit (Matt. 6.33; Rom. 5.1; 14.17).

Points of Discussion

1. As disciples, should we live as we want or as God wishes in all situations of life? 2 Cor. 5.15.
2. Who is our guide in things that matter to Jesus Christ? John 16.13-14.
3. What are the things that matter most to someone who has faith in Jesus Christ? John 14.12-14.
4. What can we learn about God's love in contemplating the gift of His only son Jesus Christ (1 John 4.10-11), and how do we remain in His love? John 15.9-14.
5. What are the two great commandments of God? (Mat. 22.37-39).
6. How can we as disciples, live in "agape" meaning a deep love towards God and others? Romans 5.5.
7. It is true that when things get tough we can relax a little and return to the worldly life until things become normal again? Luke 9.62. If not, why do so many Christians do so?

Homework

Students must begin their book reading and prayer (see "Assignment No. 4").

During the week read from Psalms 23 (The Lord is my good shepherd), Psalm 24 (The Lord made His entrance to the temple), and Psalms 25 (About God's will and forgiveness of our faults).

- *Write ideas that encourage you as you read these Psalms.*
- *What verses have spoken to you about your personal life, your ministry, your daily struggle?*
- *Read the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene Articles 33-41.*

Assign the reading of texts chosen for the next lesson.

Session 2—Inner Transformation

Instructions for presenting this session:

- 1. Finish the administrative matters for the course, including the collection of money if there are still students who have not yet paid.*
- 2. You want to emphasize the importance of homework for each session*
- 3. Take the time necessary to check on the memorization of the Biblical verses for the first two sessions.*
- 4. Prepare in advance for the main presentation so you can give it with conviction and urgency, in light of how it meets the needs of the students as ministers of the Gospel that is lived together.*

Activity 1 Bible study

Ask some of the groups to present the results of their discussions on writing Bible studies. Have them commit to working on their Bible studies each day. If necessary, give them a specific date.

Activity 2 Memory Verses

Have students recite memory verses from the first lesson.

Ask students if they read these verses in the context of Paul's letters. Give them time to explain what they discovered.

ATTENTION: Do not correct them abruptly in class if they misinterpreted the verses. Gently guide them and the other students toward a right understanding of the Scriptures. The following is a guide to what these verses mean.

Romans 12.1-2

This text serves as a bridge between the long theological section (1-11) and the next part of the letter that deals with life application (12-16). In the theological section, Paul explains that everyone is a sinner, those who did not know the law of God and who practiced major and obvious sins, but also Jews, for whom the law condemned because of their inward sins even if they had not committed acts that were sinful toward others.

As a result Paul shows how Jesus through His obedience to the Father and Jesus' death on the Cross provided atonement for sins. The work of the Holy Spirit testifies to this atoning sacrifice for all who believe, among the Jews and Gentiles. Paul then interjected a brief commentary on the role of Jews and Gentiles in God's plan of salvation for the world with the famous illustration of a tree with branches grafted into it representing Gentiles (ch. 10).

In life application section (12-16) that follows this passage, there is a key verse in 12:9, which continues until 15:14 that defines Christian love for others. The only way to live with a genuine love for others is through the transformation that occurs within the believer. The believer cannot gather up enough personal strength or ability to live such a life. The transformation required by believers also includes total consecration in which the best expression is that of a "living sacrifice."

Ephesians 4.14-15

The letter to the Ephesians presents a theology of the church. It repeats the theme found in Romans concerning unity between Jews and Gentiles in a single Church.

Paul uses two images to illustrate his point: the Church as **the body of Christ**, which expresses life and the will of Christ in the world today, and (2) the **building** built on the foundation of Christ, but still under construction.

Ephesus was a city of famous buildings including the library in which the facade still stands today, and the famous Temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

The verses combine the idea of construction with that of living organisms: the growth of a single body where all elements of the body grow in accordance with the timetable so that the exact body develops in the right way. In the same way, the construction of a building on a single plan, which each worker follows the same plan according to the master architect.

Here the passage indicates growth in groups, but such growth demands that everyone grows at the pace that is expected of them. Verses 17-24 repeat the themes we find in Romans, especially the renewal of the mind (v. 23) and to grow in Christ rather than World (v. 21). The remainder of the letter offers examples of how such a renewal is evident in everyday life—a picture of a truly Christian life.

Activity 3—Discussion on the Articles of the *Manual*.

For this activity, students will stay in groups to discuss for this discussion. Each group must choose a recording secretary who will be prepared to give a summary of the discussion. After this period of discussion you can choose a group to give their summary, and then ask others to add what they can contribute to the discussion.

During this time you will collect the journals for prayer and meditation to see how students are doing in this spiritual exercise. They must develop this habit because from time to time in other courses we will ask them to keep a journal. It is not necessary at this time to give them a mark for this work, but it is important to reiterate that this assignment accounts for 40% of the final mark for the course.

*After having read the books, return to the discussion on articles of the *Manual* by following the instructions in the first paragraph of this section.*

Take a break before continuing with the class.

Lesson 2 Presentation: Inner Transformation

This presentation is a compilation of material that is in the book *The Upward Call* that is about the subject of spiritual formation as well as parts of the classic devotional book by Hanna Whitehall Smith: *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*.

In the first lesson of this course we start with a personal and theological presentation which addressed that are called two works of grace: conversion and the entire sanctification. The Christian life which has Jesus as Lord of one's entire life will experience these two spiritual events. But the purpose of these two works of God's goes beyond the momentary "crisis" and goes toward the spiritual life which is transformed by the grace of God as it is lived every day in all circumstances.

What starts with moments of joy and dedication continues through life where Jesus is both the path and purpose. "We will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ." (Ephesians 4.15). Or, as Paul told the Corinthians, "And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3.18). What begins in the unique moments of grace develops into an intimate relationship with Jesus as well as a daily relationship which includes the gradual transformation toward a complete expression of His love through our actions, attitudes and words.

Conversion and sanctification are both characterized by a total submission to the Lord. The Christian life continues in the faith that God began to form in the life of believers and mold them into what He wants to do in their lives. As long as believers remain firm in their consecration to God, He continues to transform them into image of Christ.

Two problems often arise: one, that the believer is happy with the progress already made, and He does not want to continue progressing, knowing that progress often requires paths of suffering or sacrifice. Secondly, the believer simply refuses to believe that they need any further transformation and that initial sanctification, the forgiveness of sins and not the complete cleansing that God promises to all believers. One of these problems will stop the process of transformation that God wants to work in a disciple's life.

Growing in the grace of God

Think again about the images of growth that are found in Ephesians. Return to this letter and discuss the images of body that help us explain what it means to grow in Christ.

To the Corinthians, Paul wrote that he could not give them solid food, but should give them milk, because they were still babies in the faith. He wanted them to be

adults in the faith. We want to progress in our spiritual lives so that we can receive the food of spiritually mature adults in the faith.

A key passage which underlines this idea is 2 Peter 3.18: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever!" What does this mean: grow in grace? To answer this question we need to know about grace. Too often we hear the definition of grace as the unmerited favor of God. But this definition has no vitality. This definition does not inspire the desire to grow. Another definition that Ms. Smith gives for grace is: "wonderful love of God, without limits, without impediment, poured on us in an infinite variety of ways, without measurement and completely independent of the merits, but only according to a heart full of love that surpasses knowledge."

God's love is infinitely tender, devoted, to suffer and to support, even eager to offer the best gifts and blessings to those He loves. To grow in the grace of God, we need to be planted in the heart of God, trusting the whole of our lives to his care.

This growth is completely opposed to any growth that comes from our efforts or our self-sufficiency. This means that spiritual development is not something one does through their own efforts, as if it happened according to a prescribed list of exercises. No! Spiritual training is at its base a relationship, an intimate relationship with God. We cannot maintain a relationship with someone without having meetings with Him, and in doing so we progress in character and love for God. What kinds of meetings does the Lord seek with His disciples in the Gospels? Take a few moments later and search the Scriptures to see how Jesus met with His disciples.

A nurturing relationship

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke about clothing, saying, "See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all His splendor was dressed like one of these." He concludes by saying, "See first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matt. 6.28-29, 33). What Jesus said about clothing also includes "all these things."

God will put all of His resources at our disposal so that we can grow in grace and faith. By the nature of the new creatures that we are, we will grow in the same grace and power with which He resurrected Jesus from among the dead. In John 15 Jesus uses the image of a vine, "I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15.5). Any grace, gift, or growth in the Christian life comes from the life of Jesus who lives in us. The organic growth in a plant or animal is not the result of efforts from others, but rather the principle of life that flows into it. That is also true for spiritual growth.

The parents do not give the order for their children to grow up, as if growing up was a command to follow. But if growth does not happen, parents are correct to begin worrying. The same thing happens in the church. If the believer shows no growth or

transformation, it was precisely the right thing to do to ask the question, "What's wrong?" The problem could be the lack of spiritual food, spiritual disease, sin, selfishness or pride, frustration, and so on. All contribute to the fact that one is not growing in grace.

The illustration of the vine and branches underlines the point of an intimate relationship with the Lord, a relationship in which it is Jesus who gives the principle of life, and the believer maintains the relationship by constant contact with the Lord. Jesus had also indicated that Father prunes the branches. In other words, He removes some parts that prevent the development or that disturbs the relationship so that growth continues and the transformation can be complete, and of course, so that one can bear more fruit.

Any relationship needs care so that it develops as it should. And it is this kind of caring relationship that brings about transformation. Friendships without caring will eventually deteriorate and die. A marriage that is not care for can become an ordeal, a struggle, or end in divorce. To heal a marriage there must not only be vows of fidelity, but also the willingness to spend time together to talk about serious things of life, to share the same vision for the family, for issues in the ministry, and so on. A proper and successful marriage often springs from the fact that both husband and wife are developing the same views on life, and sometimes they are starting to resemble each other. In fact, we are talking about transformation, resulting in Christlikeness, the goal of every disciple of Jesus Christ.

Activity 4: Discussion Groups-Memory Verses—Additional Reading

Each group discusses two things: 1) prepare a report of how the memory verses helped them understand the concept of inner transformation; 2) discuss reactions to the supplementary reading if any.

End of lesson

Homework for the next lesson

1. Continue to write in the journal of prayer and meditation.
2. Read the Bible: Phil. 3.12-14; 1 Cor. 9.24-27; Col. 3.23-25; 1 Tim. 4.12; Gen. 3.8-9, Gen 17.1, Gen 28.16-17; Joshua .1-9.
3. Further exercises in the student handbook, as instructed by the teacher.

Session 3—Walking with God

Instructions for presenting the lesson.

1. The students have all read the verses and the key items as additional assignments for this session. Encourage them to share what they have learned.
2. Ask them to continue writing in their prayer journal. Review their prayer journals during the group activities.
3. Review the memory verses from previous sessions.
4. Review the materials for this session that are found in the student workbook.

Key Verses:

Phi. 3.12-14 1 Cor. 9.24-27 Col. 3.23-25 1 Tim. 4.12 Gen. Gen 3.8-9. 17.1 Gen. 28.16-17 Joshua 1.1-9.

Introduction

The spiritual disciplines are the door of liberation. "I pass through life as a passenger en route to eternity, made in God's image, but an image that has been marred, and which needs to learn to meditate, worship and think." Donald Coggan

Peter exhorts us: "Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." (1 Peter 2:11-12)

There is no reason not to practice the spiritual disciplines. The Bible calls us to the disciplines such as fasting, prayer, worship, and celebration, but it gave almost no instructions on how to accomplish them. [Question 1] The reason was so easy to see. These disciplines were applied so often and so much a part of the general culture, "the Way" was known to everyone: For example, fasting (we will talk about it in Session 5).

This is no longer true for our generation. The life that pleases God is not a series of religious duties. We only have one thing to do, namely, to know a life of relationship and intimacy with God, "the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." (James 1.17)

A. The spiritual disciplines open the door

If someone is lost, that person needs a guide to show them the right direction so that they can arrive at the place where they have to go. The word of God will show us the right direction. God speaks to us through His Word, so it is important to read it every day (Joshua 1.8; Psalms 119,105, 124-125, 135, 140, 162).

The good news comforts us in our anxieties, which can make us confused and lead us away from God. We would like to invite you to take the Wesleyan path of spiritual development. Let the word of God lead you to the true beginning point. This allows us to overcome the lack of rest and fear, and to truly discover the freedom of a holy life.

B. Walking with God

There is no possibility of spiritual formation without a relationship with God. [Question 2] At the center of spiritual development there is always a relationship carefully nurtured by God.

1. The call of God to relationship echoes through the Old Testament.

God not only calls people who are rebels, sick of sin, and lost to return to him, but He wants to establish a relationship with them. He is the God of the whole earth.

A. The call of God in the night.

The first call of God to a relationship starts with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3.8-9). They had already sinned and disobeyed Him. Yet God continues to call out to His sinful creatures through the ages.

B. God invites three people to go to a long journey.

The covenant of God with Abraham was an invitation to walk in communion with Him (Gen. 17.1). Enoch and Noah were also called to walk with God. Certainly, the spiritual life is a journey, a long journey of life, a divine call and a walk in the highway of holiness in communion with God.

God continued to call people, especially the people of Israel into a relationship with Him often described as "walking together." It is comparable to a relationship of parent and child or a marriage. Any violation in this relationship is an infidelity that sabotages spiritual development.

C. An early morning call of God.

The children of Israel were to say the "Shema" every day (Hear, Oh Israel, .. Deut. 6.4-8). They daily remembered the importance of their relationship with God.

D. God calls a man known as the Deceiver

Jacob is the impostor, the deceiver, since he tried to deceive his brother Esau with the support of his mother to gain the blessing of his father. We see the encounter between God and Jacob in Genesis 28. In his flight, Jacob finds himself in the hands of God (Gen. 28.16-17). See also the story of Moses who fled to Midian. God is always looking for us. He wants a relationship with us, although we are tempted to flee. This is a fundamental truth about the spiritual formation.

E. God calls the nation that has forgotten its commitment to God

Reads Exodus 33.1 - 34.29. Remember the words of Moses (Ex. 33.15-16). God called his people to a redemptive relationship. This manifests itself in every corner of life.

F. God calls through the tears of his messenger-preacher.

God spoke through Jeremiah to call a people to return to His covenant relationship (Jer. 31.21). Jeremiah understood that the mercy of God does not mean the lack of consequences of sin. He stressed the punishment that Israel has brought upon itself through its collective disobedience.

G. God calls in many ways.

The OT is filled with stories of how God calls to sinful people.

Reprimand and condemnation,
Concerns and care,
Visions in the night,
His chosen prophets
Through fire and the whirlwind.
In a still small voice

God is the initiator of this relationship. The concept of God who seeks men and women is the cornerstone of biblical and Wesleyan spirituality. Without this encounter and unique relationship with God, we will never find a saving and sanctifying grace that meets our deepest needs.

2. The call of God to relationship as described in the NT.

The NT also describes the primary principle of spiritual formation: God seeks us.

A. The fulfillment of the law through Christ. Mat. 22.36-38.

B. God speaks through Jesus Christ. Heb. 1.1-3; Mat. 11.27-30.

C. The parables identify God who seeks us. Luke 15ff, these parables ends with the same refrain of "joy" in the reunion.

D. Jesus was an incarnation of flesh and blood in communion with God. Luke 4.18-19; Matt. 1.23, 11.28-29. He taught his disciples to pray, starting with Abba (the word in their language that children used to call their father). His prayer in the garden (John 17.1ff.), It is prayer of intimacy and familiarity.

His love is a reflection of the Father's love. He emphasized forgiveness through sermons and parables. The prayer of Our Father places forgiveness as a central part of our petition before God. Christ's death on the cross becomes a framework in which it shapes forgiveness by the healing grace of God upon even those who were responsible for crucifying Him.

E. The crucifixion implores: "God so loved the world . . ." John 3.16-17. Jesus died so that we might be forgiven and enjoy eternal life.

BIBLICAL STUDIES

Instructions: The next study should be done in groups. Guide the groups as needed through the activity.

Read the following passages pertaining to the essential theme of God who seeks sinners to redeem them and enter into a relationship with them.

Gal 3.1 - 4.7 (specifically 3.24-29 and 4.4-7)

Phil. 2.5-11

Eph. 2.1-21.

If time permits, ask some of the groups to share their comments after reading and reflecting together on these passages.

Final instructions:

1. Assign additional readings for the next lesson, if there are any.
2. Remind students to read the key memory verses before coming to the next session.

End of lesson

Session 4—Resources for the Walk—*Worship*

Instructions for this session

1. *Finish the group reports from the preceding session.*
2. *Work on memory verses from all sessions*
3. *Introduce the following ideas as an introduction for the next two sections*
 - To Grow in the image of Christ by the means of the spiritual disciplines. . . (Note that we said that we do not grow by our efforts. These disciplines are not efforts, but adequate food which the principle of life that is in us requires.)
 - To pray by probing the Scriptures, Baptism, and to receive Holy Communion. . . We believe that they have been ordained of God (John Wesley "in the means of grace").
 - The purpose and substance of the spiritual life is not fasting, praying, singing hymns, frugal living, etc. Rather, it is to enjoy the active love of God and neighbor according to Dallas Willard in *The Spirit of Disciplines*.
4. *Give the following presentation noting the answers to the questions that are contained in the workbook.*

A. Meeting God in Worship

1. Verses keys.
2. Ps 139.23-24, 63.2; Jean 4.23-26; Heb. 4.12-13, Heb 10. 25; Rom. 12.1-9a.
3. Ask students to add comments on these verses before proceeding.
4. Romans 12.1: The entire consecration to God is our living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God and is a spiritual worship.

2. Definition of Worship. [Question 1]

Worship is to excite the conscience by the holiness of God, to be fed by the spirit of God's truth, to purify the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote its own will to the will of God' (William Temple).

Worship is to come into contact with life—real life, eternal life. It is to know and feel the Risen Christ in the community of God. It is a break through into the Shekina. It is to be overwhelmed by the Shekina of God. Our minds must be engulfed by the divine fire. God attracts and persuades.

In short, worship can be described as an act of reverence; we recognize God in His holiness, His love, His goodness, etc. In fact, God is the audience of our worship.

Note: The Shekina of God is the mysterious flame over the Ark of the Covenant indicating God's presence with His people. To enter the room with the Ark was dangerous if the person did not complete all of the purification rites. The word "shekina" is normally translated by the English word "glory" even though the English does not capture the full meaning of the original Hebrew.

3. The Purpose of Worship [Question 2]

The purpose of worship is that one might concentrate all energy, actions, and thoughts toward God in all His holiness, beauty, generosity, and power among its other characteristics, with the aim to deepen our personal relationship with Him.

Worship is described in Psalm 29:2 as well as Psalm 96 and Matthew 4:8-10. The focal point of all worship is the Person and work of God. Revelations 4 offers a clear picture of the worship of believers before the throne of God. The four living beings represent all of creation—representing the animals of creation (Genesis 10; the 24 elders cast their crowns upon the ground (all they have received for their faith in God), as an act of worship.

Liturgy or form is secondary, but there are some key elements to incorporate worship (worship in a group setting). Obviously, God is to be glorified, and Christ is to be preached (Christocentric worship). We are in God's presence and seek His glory.

Worship is an essential means of grace in that it guides our approach to all other means of grace. Christian worship is the most crucial, urgent, and most glorious action for believers to be a part of (Karl Barth).

What are the six key components of worship?

1. Declare the riches of God (Revelations 4.11)
2. Vocal and public praise of God. In Hebrew, the word "Psalms" means praise (Ps. 22:22). Praise is when someone speaks about God and His work for someone else, whether it is speaking of joy, suffering, confession. . . Psalms are essential in giving us language for offering God praise in all circumstances.
3. Offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God. As Christians we must offer our entire being to God (Ps. 51.16-17; Romans 12.1); a sacrifice of repentance before God; the sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15); even when things go wrong or too difficult to overcome (Ps. 30.11-12); a sacrifice to share and do good to others (Heb. 13.16); an offering in cash or in relation to God as a sign of His Lordship over our whole life (cf. Mal. 3.8-12).
4. Praise God in spirit and in truth (John 4.23-24). It is a question of attitude and commitment of the heart. We need to understand who God is and we offer ourselves to him in spirit and in truth. Many people come to the church to impress others by their joyful dancing, and so on. They do so without possessing an attitude of obedience to God.
5. Worship demands are complete participation. Once we have pledged our hearts before God, we stand ready to enter the depths of worship. We do not

have to worship as spectators but as participants in the adoration of the living God who is present among His people. The worship service should lead people to praise God, to express their desires, their expectations, their joys. . . Therefore, we pray, read the Bible, preach; a call, offering testimonies, announcements, times of dancing; everything in a worship service is focused on how it allows us to participate in adoration of God alone (1 Cor. 14.33).

6. Worship, therefore, means to serve God in all our lives. Worship cannot be confined to religious duties and Sunday mornings. According 12.1 Romans, we must offer our bodies as a living sacrifice.

Likewise, we will truly experience God's power in our lives, and in our nations, when we enter an intimate relationship with the One Who knows our limitations and needs, and accepts the sacrifice of praise from even the poorest among us.

What is praise?

- To recognize God and proclaim His wonders (Ps. 104; 1 Chron. 29.10-13);
- To acknowledge what God has done for us (Isaiah 25.1; Ps 25.1);
- To exalt God (Ps. 34.3 & 99.5);
- To worship God (Dan. 4.34-37);
- To magnify God (Luke 1.46, Acts 10.46);
- To glorify God (Revelation 15.4; Ps 29.1).

Note these verses focus on God. All too often, our worship is characterized by references to "me," "mine," "I need," "I," or "I ask." Too often these phrases do not belong in worship, but reveal a spirit of begging. If in my thoughts, I am the center of worship, it is not true worship or praise.

Why are offerings necessary? What kinds of offerings are there?

Let's return to the definition of worship. "Through various forms" we can say to God that we are faithful to him, that He is our God and not another. The Bible tells us that when people worshipped God, they came to the temple with their minds full of joy, and with an offering as proof of their love for him and their confidence in Him as God. These were acts of faith and thanksgiving.

There were several types of offerings, including thanksgiving offerings, vow offerings, and tithes (which are not really offering because they already belong to God). Only the sacrifice offered for the sins, the sacrifice of atonement, was replaced by the death of Jesus on the cross. All other offerings keep their value in the New Testament as in the Old. To give offerings to God as an act of worship is still absolutely necessary.

Offerings do not always have to take the form of money. Some people offer food (animals, vegetables, etc.) as the result of their work. Others offer special services according to their capabilities: hospitality in several ways, construction,

transport, mechanical repairs, education, art, and so on., Anything according to what God had given them. The story of Dorcas in the Acts 9 is a clear example of someone giving back to God according to their abilities. Everything that God grants us can serve as a source of offering gifts to Him and to His Church.

We have already seen in Romans 12 where Paul exhorts believers to offer themselves as living sacrifices. That offering is the basic gift we can offer God, including obedience to the word of God. Paul wrote: "to offer your body . . . this is your spiritual act of worship." (verse 1)

It is the offering which is worship. Without offering, there is no worship service, there is no true worship.

4. Some types of worship

A. Family Worship (1 Tim3:4-6)

The Church cannot remain on the periphery of the social problems that affect the family.

- To help other families to be balanced; the family of the pastor must also be balanced.
- The pastor must be a family-oriented person. One's spouse and children must be considered as a central part of one's ministry. Nurture your relationship to your spouse. Facilitate dialogue between you and your children. Play with your children, take walks with them to visit families close by, how to keep the goats, how to welcome each other and receive visitors. The involvement of your family in all of these aspects will assist your ministry.
- The church is a family of families: if the leader, i.e. the family's pastor, is in poor health, it will affect the church.
- All Christians must learn to pray together as a family.
- Encourage your children and your husband (is) to have confidence in you.
- Integrate your spouse one way or another in the ministry to protect yourself and to protect him or her. When your spouse feels neglected, and he or she sees you are placing more importance to others than to them. They may become jealous, and it will become a a stumbling block in your ministry.

B. The Sunday (or weekly) worship service.

Discuss this presentation in groups. See the coursebook for instructions.

(Read through the list below and spend time talking about each point.).

1. The call to worship: invite people to focus on God. Read a Biblical text on a call to worship and adoration.
2. Prayer of Invocation: ask God to touch us specifically during this service.

3. Song of prayer and worship
4. Common Prayer
5. Chorale song (or another song of worship)
6. Welcoming of visitors – Announcements and News
7. Songs of worship and praise
8. Offerings
9. Pastoral Prayer (adoration, gratitude, confessions, intercession, etc..)
10. Chorale - Reading
11. Testimony (s)
12. Songs of Praise
13. Message / Response / Challenge
14. News and Announcements (often it is better to add this element after the welcoming visitors to stay consistent with the theme of worship)
15. Closing Song - Benediction = pastor goes to the door to greet people.

C. Prayer Meeting

We have discussed how the worshipper must concentrate on God not themselves or it is not true worship. At this point, we need to add a word about bringing personal requests and petitions before the Lord. God invites us to bring our burdens to Him in prayer (Philippians 4:6). A portion of the worship service is devoted to this exercise of prayer, knowing that God will hear and respond to the prayers of the faithful. The context for this prayer, whether in personal devotions or corporate worship, is one of faith in God and His love for us.

The churches also organize prayer meetings precisely for such petitions and for prayers of intercession. We rarely think about a order of service for this kind of worship. But, we need to think about how these services of intercessory prayer and healing and Bible study all need to focus on God and His will.

Our submission to God is the first answer to our prayers—that we will follow Him no matter what happens.

Activity in Groups: Discuss any of the supplementary reading on worship.

Supplementary issue and questions for discussion: All our churches want to use a sound system for amplification, and even use it at such a loud volume that it distorts a speaker's voice through the microphone.

- 1. What is the true role of sound amplification in the worship service?*
- 2. Why do some pastors allow sound amplification so loud that it completely distorts the pronunciation of words, resulting in a poor understanding of what is being said or sung?*
- 3. How can our churches best use a sound system in our worship of God?*
- 4. What is the relationship between the sound system and the responsibility of local churches to be a good neighbor in their neighborhood?*

Assignments for the Next Session

1. Read the biblical texts chosen as preparation for the next lesson.
2. Read any articles assigned by the teacher.
3. Finish work on Bible study and get ready and make them at the beginning of the next lesson.

End of lesson

Section 5—Resources for the Walk— ***Prayer, Meditation, Fasting***

Instructions for the submission of this lesson.

1. The workbook contains questions that will help students to follow the presentation. Note these issues and incorporate them into the presentation or discussion afterwards.
2. The students have read the biblical passages related to the presentation on prayer. Let them contribute to the lesson as a result of reading after going through the first part of the presentation.
3. After introducing the presentation on fasting, we must assign a specific exercise of fasting, either jointly or at the personal level, and encourage students to participate. Tell them that you are going to seek look for their reflections in the prayer journal.

Prayer

1. Key Verses.

1 Thess 5.16-18 ; Matt 6.5-18 ; Hebrews 10.19-22 ; Philippians 4.6-7; Luke 11.1-13 ; Romans 8.26-27 ; Ephesians 6.18-20 ; 1 John 5.14-15 ; Matt. 4.1-11 ; 1 Tim. 2.1-4

2. Definition of Prayer.

Prayer is talking with God. It is a two-way communication: we talk to God while he listens, and He speaks to us while we listen. Prayer is a vital means of grace. Prayer is very important in our spiritual walk. Nothing should take its place in the life of a believer. When praying to God we are talking heart to heart and friend to friend. There is no need to change the tone of voice or try to use super pious language. It is an interaction between God (the Father) and us (His children). (In addition, God is not deaf so that we must shout out loud every time we pray, especially during worship. Such methods have pagan roots.)

Prayer has several facets including to:

- Wait on God (Isaiah 40.31; Psalm 6.1-10; Psalm 27.14).
- Intercede or pray for others (Ezekiel 22.30; 1 Tim. 2.1; Isaiah 59.16).
- Ask God for what we need (Matt. 7.7-11).
- Listen (hear) God (John 10.27).
- Be strengthened for the good fight (Ephesians 6.10-18).
- Giving thanks to God (1 Thess. 5.18, 1 Tim. 2.1).
- Offer praise to God as a sacrifice (Hebrews 13.15)
- Ask God to forgive our sins and our mistakes (1 John 1.9; Matt. 6.12)

3. Praying is when we align with the purpose of God's creation

It is to agree with God and join Him in what He is doing in our world. To pray is to submit our desires, our hopes and wishes to God and to bring them into line with the intention of creation and redemption of God.

4. Why do we need to pray?

A. Prayer is a privilege. As a disciple of Jesus Christ, we are entitled to come before God and talk Him, the King of kings, as both a friend and Father. God is holy and knows everything would have an audience with us who are sinners and ignorant in our natural me.

B. Prayer enables us to grow spiritually. It brings forgiveness, strength, peace, direction, and the Holy Spirit in our lives.

C. Jesus Christ has made prayer a priority. He considered prayer more important than food (Matt. 4.2), sleep (Luke 6.12) and the ministry (Luke 5.15-16). He devoted time for prayer (Mark 1.35; Matt. 14.23; Luke 5.16) and prayed before making important decisions (Luke 6.12-15). Even now, he intercedes for believers and at the right hand of God (Hebrews 7.25; Romans 8.34).

D. We pray to defeat the devil, because he is afraid of people who pray (James 4:7, Matthew 26.41, 1 Peter 5:8-9).

E. Prayer overcomes fear, distraction, doubt, condemnations, temptations, discouragement, non-spiritual ideas that the devil is trying to use to make our prayer ineffective.

F. The prayer with fasting gives us time to combat forms of excessive appetites and lusts. When you have a temptation or you covet or lust, pray to God who gives us the strength and wisdom and you will overcome. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. "Be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray." (1 Peter 4:7). Fasting is a way to revived in our relationship with the Lord. Refuel yourself in the Lord through prayer and fasting by following the example of Jesus.

5. Praying to whom?

- You can pray while alone (Matt. 6.6).
- You can pray with one or two other people (Matt. 18. 19).
- You can pray with a group of believers or in the assembly.

N.B. When you pray with others, make sure you have the same heart with them, since where we are gathered together in unity, the Lord sends blessings (Psalm 133.1).

6. Obstacles to effective prayer.

- Not forgiving others or ourselves (Mark 11.25)
- Unbelief (Hebrews 11.6)
- Doubt or lack of faith (James 1.6-8)
- Sloth (James 4.2)
- Bad motivations (Jacques 4.3)
- Unconfessed sin (1 John 1.7-9; Isaiah 59.1-2; Psalm 66.18)

You have just completed section of the presentation on prayer. Allow students to either contribute their experiences, or respond to what they read in the Bible. Guide the discussion in such a way that it continues to inform the subject of prayer in spiritual formation.

Break

B. Spiritual Reading and Meditation

Hear the voice of God for principles about how He leads and guides in our walk with Him.

Key Verses

Romans 12.1-2 ; Proverbs 3.5-6 ; Ephesians 2.10 ; Psalm 139.13-16 ; Isaiah 30.21 ; Isaiah 55.6 ; Ephesians 1.3-5

1. Discovering God's will is essential for our lives.

God has a plan for every disciple who dreams of God's future (Jeremiah 29:11), to live in peace, to live in His blessings and to express them with joy. It is necessary to have an intimate relationship with Him, true communion with the Lord. Despite every circumstance, God's plan does not change if we maintain contact with Him and nourish our relationship to Him.

- God would prove to us and prove its commitment to us (Heb. 11.6, Jacques 1.5).
- God wants us to choose His ways (Prov. 3.5, Psalm 32.8-9).
- God wants to guide us specifically (Ps. 25.12 and 32.8). He knows what we need, we must believe in Him, obey him, listen to him and keep his commandments.

However, the devil wants to distract us from the deep contemplation of our Creator by the noise around us and the rushing of the crowds. According to Carl Jung: "Haste does not come from the devil, it is the devil."

The Bible uses two different Hebrew words *hagah* and *chira* to convey the idea of meditation. These words have different meanings: listening to the word of God,

reflecting on the works of God, repeating the actions of God, meditating on God's law, etc.

In each case, there was a change in the direction of one's life after an encounter with the living God. Repentance and obedience are essential to any understanding of biblical meditation (Psalms 119:97, 101-102). It is this continual insistence on obedience and faithfulness that most clearly distinguishes Christian meditation from Eastern and secular forms of meditation.

God spoke to His prophets and His people when they made themselves available to Him, and searched for time to spend with Him. "On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night" (Psalm 63:7). See also Genesis 24.63, Psalm 119:148, Ps.1:2, 1 Samuel 3:1-18, 1 Kings 19:9 -18; Isaiah 6:1-16; Jeremiah 20.9.

One way to spend focused time with God is through spiritual reading. *Lectio divina*, as spiritual reading is sometimes called, is to read the Biblical texts in a way that seeks for God's voice. In the past, this was not easy because literature was not as available as it is in the contemporary world. There were very few copies of books so reading was not often a time of silent contemplation for the eyes and memory. Now that many more people have access to a Bible and biblical literature, they can now read and meditate on His word day and night (Joshua 1.8, Ps 119:105, Deuteronomy 6.4-9).

During an extremely busy ministry, Jesus made a habit of withdrawing into "a solitary place." (Matthew 14:13).

What did Jesus in the solitary place? He was seeking His Heavenly Father, He listened, He communed with Him. And He calls us to do the same.

Real meditation must lead us to listen and obey God. Throughout the history of God's people, we see God continually reaching out to His rebellious children. See the stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham. God wants to talk to us, walk among us, teach us, and guide us.

Despite many obstacles and detours, Moses learned to hear the way to God and to obey His word. In fact, the Bible says that God spoke to Moses face-to-face as a someone who speaks to a friend.(Exodus 33.11). Moise went to a calming place, sure and safe, where He could be in deep communion with God. Like Moses, we must be prepared to withdraw into the silent places, into the inner world of contemplation.

2. We must prepare ourselves to discern the will of God.

- We must accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and do his will (Romans 12.1-2; Matt. 6.33).
- We must respond as God wants in all situations and be obedient to His will (Ps. 25.10).

- We must be humble (Ps. 25. 9).
- We must listen to God in prayer (Prov. 8.34), and find that practice makes it easier to continue praying.
- We must believe in God (Prov. 3.5-7). He wants to talk to us, we should listen. • We need a pure heart (Ps 66.18; I John 1:9), and the Holy Spirit should be free to convince us of our infidelities.
- We need to make progress toward spiritual maturity: this means that we have to lower ourselves and raise up God in every circumstance.
- We must fear the LORD: hate evil and do good; which is the will of God (Prov. 8 .3, 9.10).
- We need to worship and praise God (Ps. 22.3, 100.4). We must therefore grow closer to God so that we can hear when He speaks to us. We must move forward in faith, knowing what God wants, obeying His will and believing in God for what we cannot do.
- Four voices have access in our lives, and in order to hear God, we must:
 - A. Not always listen to the crowd. For example, the question, "What will I tell the people?"
 - B. Pay attention to the inner voice, especially if we are not yet totally dedicated to God and ready to pick up His cross.
 - C. Silence Satan's voice in the name of Jesus Christ and the Enemy will not speak.
 - D. Submit ourselves to God and recognize Him as Lord and follow His will.

We must find a place that is quiet and free of any interruption. No phone nearby. If it is possible to find a place that overlooks a beautiful landscape, so much the better. It would be desirable to have a place reserved for this purpose rather than have to seek out a new place every day.

The position of prayer may vary, but it must be one that prevents us from being distracted. For example, close one's eyes, raise one's hands, kneeling, sitting down, hands open on one's knees, etc. Maintain spiritual solitude so that you can contemplate "the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Corinthians 4.6).

Regardless of how you proceed, the goal is to focus the attention of the body, emotions, mind and soul on the greatness of the glory of God and to express this attention toward God both spiritually and physically.

3. Good use of time for the Lord.

We should schedule our activities and avoid delays. Let us avoid the habit of the "African Time": we will get to it later.

If the prayer meeting starts at 9:00 a.m., do so. If you are late, start by apologizing before continuing. If you fall behind have time to apologize in a sincere and humble. May the Lord help us to prepare our people to make better use of time for Him and for His people.

4. How can we hear the voice of God?

God has many good things to say and the more we listen, the more we come to hear. When we begin to hear the voice of God, He responds to the big questions. He speaks of salvation. We hear His voice concerning major decisions. And when we cannot get to the place where we can hear Him clearly, we call out to Him, to help us communicate to Him. He knows everything, and He reigns. Our goal is to become imitators of Jesus Christ to know the will of the Father.

It is best to search for God's voice in the certainty of the Scriptural witness. We have many responses to our most disturbing questions, right there in the Bible. Ask the Holy Spirit to be your guide through the Scripture, to reveal God's truth through His word.

- When God spoke things are created (Genesis 1.1). When we live the word of God, we are liberated to live in God's truth, because it is this truth that sets us free (John 8.31-32).
- We must humbly receive the word of God in our lives and obey it because it brings freedom (James 1.21-25).
- We must receive the word of God because it offers a source of faith (Romans 10.17) and direction (Isaiah 30.21).
- The word of God can not return to Him without accomplishing its purpose for which it has been sent (Isaiah 55.8-11). We submit to the will of God.

5. The characteristics of the Word that comes from God.

A. *It is immediate.* This means that the call comes in a direct and personal way, which is powerful and arresting. It is like an arrow hitting a target, and difficult to ignore

B. *It is relevant and applicable.* The word will be relevant and applicable to the situations that we are going through in our lives.

C. It is effective. The Word of God always produces effects. If we receive it and apply, it will produce fruit.

D. *It is suitable.* Not only is it appropriate to be relevant to the situation, but also it is consistent with all other evidence in our lives. We must not be limited; we must allow the word of God to touch every aspect of our lives.

In conclusion, we must allow God to guide us and put His will at the forefront of all circumstances we face. We need to act upon His will. To know His will is a great privilege. Our attitude in holiness and obedience brings us closer to Him. I would like to suggest that you always ask yourself the following question: "Am I close, committed and connected to God?"

When this happens, meditation becomes as simple and natural as a seed that grows to become a tree. At the same time, meditation and spiritual reading of the word of God needs the right conditions that are not priorities in today's secular world. God does not err and He does not hurry. Doing His will is to have a joyful and satisfying life because He has created us to do His will and enjoy His goodness.

Questions for Group Discussion:

1. Why is guidance a matter of the heart?
2. Before our salvation, Satan manipulated us as puppets. He was in control of our lives. When we were saved, God cut the ropes with which we controlled by the devil. Do you think God simply put His own strings on us to control us in what we do and where we go? Discuss.
3. We feed sometimes feed our minds with things that are not of God, which makes it difficult to hear the voice of God. If this is true, what should we do?
4. How do you feel when you arrive late to church on Sunday? How do you react when you have a missed two hours?
5. How do you fight a strong lust or an excessive appetite for something?

C. The Fasting

For this part of the presentation, let the students present their reactions any supplementary reading (especially Foster, chapter 4 on the discipline of fasting). At the end of this discussion, each student will propose ways to exercise this discipline in the period between this session and the next. Remember the Bible study project, and be prepared to monitor the progress of these projects.

Assignments for the next lesson

1. Read the biblical passages cited in section B, "Spiritual Reading and Meditation. Romans 12.1-2 ; Proverbs 3.5-6 ; Ephesians 2.10 ; Psalm 139.13-16 ; Isaiah 30.21 ; Isaiah 55.6 ; Ephesians 1.3-5

Session 6—Companions for the Christian Journey

Instructions for the presentation of this session.

- 1. Try to collect more Bible studies (on Ephesians 4).*
- 2. This lesson is a blend of presentations and activities. These activities are personal but toward the end of the session, groups can discuss these exercises together.*
- 3. For the following sentences is not a bad idea to dictate them slowly so that that all students have them*

In the community of believers. . .

The Lord has commanded us to strengthen each other, according to John Wesley.

That blessing is for us to have companions on the road to the new Jerusalem. If you do not, you must, because no one can make this road alone, again, from John Wesley in his letter.

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (Gal. 6.2).

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you . . . Therefore, build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” (1 Thess. 3.12; 5.11).

1. Introduction

Christianity is a community affair. We can not do this alone. We need each other. Life is not a holy pilgrimage of a lonely soul. The Church is called to be a community, a group of sinners saved by grace to walk with each other along the way.

John Wesley was correct when he organized believers in societies, bands, and classes. From the early days of the Holy Club to putting people together with a mentor, these kinds of groups have a purpose within the family of God.

Your Redeemer knows that you need companions for the journey. God has called the Church to form nourishing congregations—educating and intensive—to build our faith as a group of two or more to keep us on the right path of holiness.

Our Wesleyan heritage is abundantly rich in how Christians should help each other on the road to the new Jerusalem. Our spiritual ancestor John Wesley succeeded in helping people do this. Wesley referred to the Methodist movement as “a connection.” He worked hard and managed to keep the first Wesleyans connected to each other.

2. What is a church?

Having Christians together in the same building is not a church. Even worshiping together is not enough. A church which has a large single worship service each week cannot rightly be called a church without some other aspects within it. Its members need to be in relationship to God and to each other. They form a family of believers. They need to reflect the image of the early Church: feeding each other by the word of God, visiting to comfort the sick, and educating each other, sharing the blessings and responsibilities of a common vision.

3. What is a community of faith?

The Church is called a community of faith. The Bible along with 2,000 years of Christian experience have taught us that no one can live a holy life by themselves alone, without the support of the faith community.

What does it mean to be in a community?

The word community is described by terms such as these:

union – in communion – partnership – mutual sharing – harmony – agreement – affinity – similarity – interdependence

The antonym, or opposite, of community includes disparity, difference, disagreement, conflict, as well as private, personal, individual bias.

Exercise: Using the above information, each student should write a sentence defining how a church is a community of faith. If there is time, discuss the definitions as a group.

4. What is a nourishing congregation?

This is a community that helps Christians to find and live a holy life. The Latin word, **nourrir** (food, to feed) comes from the same root as the English word *nurse*. It is defined and described by these words:

-- to nurse (as in breastfeed), to nurse (a sick person, a plant), to rock (in her arms), dealing with care, maintenance (of hopes, feelings), feed, support, strengthen, strengthen, fortify, gain strength, shaping, develop, educate, educate, give lessons to guide, sharpen, discipline, and encouragement.

Its antonyms include neglect, ignore, miss, turn a blind eye to, dominate and deprive (someone of something).

The food is also a Christian theme in Galatians. Consider Galatians 4.19 and all of chapter 5.

- A. What is the purpose of spiritual formation according Galatians 4.19? (“until Christ is formed in you.”)
- B. What are the limits of Christian freedom? The believer is free to do whatever he or she would like to do? (Not really, see Galatians 5.13).
- C. Consider the works of the flesh and fruits they produce (Galatians 5.19-21). The fruit of the Spirit are different (Galatians 5:22-23). Make a comparison between the two lists.

5. Is my church is a nourishing congregation?

Personal Exercise: Follow these instructions to describe the local church in which you have responsibilities.

- A. Make a list of departments (formal and informal) of your church that provides spiritual nourishment.
- B. In what areas have you helped your church to become a nourishing church? What do you do to help your faith community, your church, to become more efficient in its nourishing ministries?
- C. What part of the program in the church provides an arena for people to talk about things that trouble them the most? (ANSWER. It's in small groups, workshops, in the prayer meetings, where people are face to face and there with open hearts. The face to face groups promote: encouragement, acceptance, affiliation, education, responsibility, being accountable to each other. Such obligations are not elements on the spiritual periphery but they are at the heart of the church’s mission. We need to encourage them by enabling people to open up and liberate people from their troubles, as well as assisting one another in the spiritual life. This will involve pastoral visits and the support of lay ministers in providing this ministry to and for others.

Discussion: In groups, to discuss the results the previous activities. If time permits, have them response to the following question:

How can we confront the situation in a local church where community does not exist as defined in this lesson?

During this period of discussion, the teacher will collect prayer journals and give a mark/grade for this assignment.

End of the session

Session 7—Ways to Serve Others on the Journey

Instructions for presenting this session.

The presentation provides general ideas regarding the concept of Christian service. It describes pastoral counseling and ministry between the pastor and the membership (which is not necessarily reserved for pastors), and personal evangelism. For this lesson to be translated into action, it is necessary that students are personalizing this information, according to the needs of their ministry. As in other lessons, group work is therefore essential to the educational process, because that is where ideas become reality.

Activity 1: Memory Verse. Work on Matthew 20:28. Remember to mention its context in the Gospel of Matthew.

Activity 2: The presentation of material, interspersed with other activities. Note that the students will have questions based on the presentation to which they must respond.

1. Introduction

Start with a question that seems relevant to our spiritual formation in the context of ministry: ***Does your spirituality produce personal sacrifice in the context of Christian service?***

If Jesus Christ is being formed in us, like Christ, we must be ready to abandon our lives for God and for the people He died for. Holy service is like becoming a servant for Christ and for our fellow pilgrims. According to Luke 17:10, "So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"

We can identify with the proclamation of Paul in Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." According to the apostle Paul, to die with Christ was the only way to get rid of the demands of the law and the world that has a tendency to do what I want rather than what Christ wants. This death, however, comes with a new life and a new vision: To please God and to do only what He wants.

2. Submission

If the cross is a sign of submission, so the towel is a symbol of service. According to Martin Luther, "A Christian is a free, and not subject to anything, but a Christian is also a servant, subject to all." After watching the servant before them, Jesus called His disciples to a lifetime of servanthood: "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." (John 13.14-15).

The idea of service leads us toward the mundane, ordinary, or even the absurd. In the spiritual discipline of service, there is great freedom. Service allows us to say no to promotions up the ladder as well as to the authority granted according to worldly standards. By contrast, the spiritual authority of Jesus is an authority that is not found in a position or title, but in a towel. "Instead, whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant. . . just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve." (Matthew 20.25-28).

Submission allows us to distinguish between real problems and stubbornness. We are free to appreciate others. Their dreams and plans become important to us. We welcome the success of others and we feel a genuine sadness for their failures. We discover that it is far better to serve as a neighbor than to act like their master.

In renouncing all our own rights to derail the growth of the church, we continue by being obedient to the command of Jesus, "But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Jesus calls us to self-denial without self-hatred. We need to please God and safeguard our relationship with others. "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.." (Ephesians 5.21).

Activity 2a Consider Colossians 3:19-4:1. Who has more responsibility according to this passage, for the unity of the church?

Continue with the presentation.

Acts of servanthood toward whom?

1. Acts of servanthood are first of all toward God. As in the prayer of Thomas Kempis: "Father, as you will, what you will and when you will."
2. Toward the Scriptures: We look toward the Spirit that inspired Scripture to interpret it and apply it to our condition.
3. To our family: listen and share with others, that is the key. (Phil. 2.4).
4. To our neighbors and those we meet in the course of everyday life. Small acts of kindness are essentially being a good neighbor like regular sharing food, child care,

regular and brief visits, visits to resolve important issues, sharing tools. Small bonds that bind people constitute acts of submission.

5. To the community of believers, Christ's body. We are need to seek ways to encourage and develop human relationships

6. When it comes to the ruined and the despised, defenseless or helpless, such as AIDS victims, widows, the oppressed and the rejected, unmarried mothers, abandoned women, the disabled, widows, orphans, etc. (James 1.27).

7. In submitting to human authority unless it becomes destructive.

Remember that when one does their duty they have done well, even if have received no recognition. Paul asks us to pray for the authorities (1 Tim. 2.1-3).

Our relationships lead us toward interdependence of a partnership in the ministry, all of which are subject to the Lord. Let us therefore serve one another for the glory of God.

3. Service of the Pharisees and True Service

A. Service of the Pharisees is just human effort. True service comes from a deep relationship with the Divine and a concern for the other.

B. Service of the Pharisees is just like doing good business. True service does not distinguish between little and large acts of service, and it welcomes every opportunity to serve.

C. Service of the Pharisees need external rewards, such as applause and the appreciation of others. True service is content to remain anonymous.

D. Service of the Pharisees is concerned with outcomes and expects a high rate of return. True service takes a real pleasure in serving both enemies and friends, expecting nothing in return.

E. Service of the Pharisees choose whom it will serve because it provide certain advantages. Therefore, it is temporary. True service does not discriminate and is servant of all, all of the time. (Mark 9:35).

F. Service of the Pharisees is insensitive and breaks both the community and seeks to manipulate others. True service heals and builds community, and is full of humility.

Activity 2b: In groups, prepare a short list of four or five examples in local churches where people take part in service according to the Pharisees. Do not give actual names or locations, just general information to be understood. This distorted view of service exists everywhere. Think about

how you as a pastor should face such situations with God's grace and compassion. In addition, if someone wants to admit such examples in his own life, it would be a good idea for him to repent and commit to doing better in the future.

Continue the presentation

4. The pastoral visits and conversations (a way to serve others)

As in any other Christian service, it is necessary to be totally dedicated "as a living sacrifice, which is reserved for God and that is pleasing. That's our ministry, which is genuine worship that we must give," a paraphrase of Romans 12.1.

Within this framework to serve others in ministry, set up a time for real dialogue and pastoral visits, since it is as important as preparing a sermon, or teaching a devotional lesson. In fact, without such conversations, the pastor does not know the real needs of the faithful.

Home visitation is a consistent tool for evangelization in the village or the city. In doing so, pastoral conversation cares for the hearts of people injured internally and comforting in a private darkness. Pastors, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, have made home visits and, at the same time, have been known to have prevented people from committing suicide.

Pastoral visits are important but should be geared to produce desired results. For example, there should be agreed upon hours depending on availability and where the person feels prepared to talk freely.

There are some times that are not the best, such as not very early in the morning or late at night, not at the times of full employment, nor hours of rest or meals, unless this have been scheduled in advance and without a negative impact on the ones receiving the visit. For many, family time is short and valuable, as for others they may work for a secular boss who is not concerned about the Christian well-being of someone as much as money being lost while the pastor chats with their employee. This requires flexibility and the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Before the visit you have to pray for yourself, pray for the atmosphere, and how to pray for the person being visited (for their lives, families, jobs, plans, challenges). Respect weekly planning as well as scheduling visits in advance and then keeping the appointment.

During the pastoral visit, as well as for worship and Bible studies, **the phone must be switched off.**

Begin with prayer.

Talk about Jesus and not your personal experiences in ministry.

Do not allow person to get busy preparing food or beverage.

Go straight to the purpose of pastoral conversation first. Then, if there's time you can eat and drink together.

Be observant and a good listener (active listening).

Create an attitude of hope in Jesus Christ. Jesus wants the best for this person in receiving salvation for eternal life and encouragement in their daily lives.

Occasionally, schedule visits with your spouse to visit couples, widows/widowers and men/women living alone. Or walk someone you are training as an assistant, so that you may dispel some traps of the devil. Avoid prolonged visits to a family in the absence of the father.

5. How can you as a servant help others grow in their connection and commitment to God and others?

John Wesley encouraged the use of five fundamental questions in the conferences, classes, and bands that helped make the connection between members. It kept their relationship solid and helped them focus on God. This method can still work today. We can use the following adapted questions:

1. Have you experienced a spiritual failure recently? Spiritually speaking, have you been disappointed lately? How can we be help in restoring your spiritual growth or in spiritual support? When we pray for and with you today, how should we focus our prayers?

2. What temptations or spiritual problems you have faced recently? In what area of your life do you feel most vulnerable? At what point or area of your life do you feel weaker now than in the past? What point or area of life do you feel a lot of pressure?

3. If you have overcome any temptation recently can you share with us how the battle was been won (or how the victory was achieved)? Can you share with us how you found the strength to endure?

4. Has Lord revealed something about your heart and your life that makes you want us to take a moment to pray for your attitude, your lifestyle, your service or your ministry and your motives?

5. Is there a problem so deep spiritually or purely personal that you have never been able to say to someone or to confess? Can you talk to God? Do you wear certain burdens of the past that make you fail or make you depressed emotionally? Would you share with us as your spiritual partner? If not, would you like us to pray about it now -- Do you have a time each day or week when you go to pray about this question or problem? Can we pray with you about this problem/question during the upcoming week?

Some people prefer to contact the pastor or servants especially for prayer, encouragement and advice. Do you have time to be open and honest to God as you meet alongside a fellow servant? John Wesley held these kinds of meetings on

Saturday night. Find an appropriate time to plan meetings like this, and you will find God will be there with you.

Activity 2c. Return to the Acts of Servanthood suggestions given above. Briefly review those again and add the following acts of submission to the list. Each group should choose an act of submission that reflects a need in their community or church that they may respond to according to their own resources.

Acts of Servanthood continued

- Acts of kindness among neighbors—sharing necessities, visits, obligations, bonds, etc.
- Tasks within the church—maintenance on building, helping the members
- To groups of people with special needs, such as orphans, widows, unmarried mothers, AIDS victims, the disabled, scorned or oppressed
- Service toward the civil authorities of the city, province, state.

Assignments

1. Complete supplementary reading.
2. Review all memory verses to recite before the end of class
3. Update your prayer journal.
4. Organize a way to incorporate acts of submission and service into your ministry as a pastor and as a disciple.

Conclusion

Instructions for this lesson:

For this lesson, there are three main activities, apart from the short presentation.

- 1. Begin the lesson with the presentation printed.*

We began the course by saying that the spiritual growth is not the result of our efforts, but the result of our intimacy with the Lord whose life transforms us through contact with Him. From there, we had introduced the fact that maintaining this relationship is signified by a daily walk with Him, a walk that eventually shows that the transformation is under way. The real spiritual development begins after entire sanctification and continues every moment of every day, and not by the means of special events, or special revelations, or other religious phenomena.

By now, we have introduced the spiritual disciplines as the daily food of our spiritual life, which are as important as water and food are necessary for our physical body. In the history of the Church, there were periods when these disciplines replaced a vital relationship with God. A faithful believer were expected during those times to show his or her dedication to religious authorities by specific exercises, and the church then promised to guarantee eternal if these disciplines were accomplished.

But the disciplines presented in this course are not to be used like that. The spiritual disciplines are intended to bring a greater good. They are valuable only as they put us before God, so that he could give us the freedom that we seek. The goal of the spiritual life is liberation from sin, the disciplines are only the means to that end. They are not the answer, but they lead to the response. Let us grow closer to Christ and use the spiritual disciplines as a way to draw us closer to Him. Thus we can say as Paul to Timothy: "Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given to you . . . Be diligent in these matter; give yourself wholly to hem, so that everyone may see your progress." (1 Timothy 4:13-15)

Activity 1. Discussion of Supplementary Reading

(Assignment No. 2) Students who speak French must give a report of the articles they had read during the course. Students who do not speak French must give a report of the issues that their group had discussed, and their understanding of these items.

Activity 2. (Assignment No. 3) Memorization of Bible Verses.

For memorizing the verses, divide the verses between groups so that all the passages are assigned to each group. Ask each member of the group to write the verses by heart, and explain its meaning in the context of the Biblical book that are found. If they can not write, they can recite directly to you or to another student. At the close of these activity, students can begin the next one.

Activity 3. Final Reflection

Each student should write a list of three things he or she has learned during the course.

Appendix, *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene*

The Covenant of Christian Conduct Paragraphs 33-41

A. The Christian Life

33. The church joyfully proclaims the good news that we may be delivered from all sin to a new life in Christ. By the grace of God we Christians are “to put off the old self”—the old patterns of conduct as well as the old carnal mind—and are to “put on the new self”—a new and holy way of life as well as the mind of Christ. (Ephesians 4:17-24)

33.1. The Church of the Nazarene purposes to relate timeless biblical principles to contemporary society in such a way that the doctrines and covenants of the church may be known and understood in many lands and within a variety of cultures. We hold that the Ten Commandments, as reaffirmed in the New Testament, constitute the basic Christian ethic and ought to be obeyed in all particulars.

33.2. It is further recognized that there is validity in the concept of the collective Christian conscience as illuminated and guided by the Holy Spirit. The Church of the Nazarene, as an international expression of the Body of Christ, acknowledges its responsibility to seek ways to particularize the Christian life so as to lead to a holiness ethic. The historic ethical standards of the church are expressed in part in the following items. They should be followed carefully and conscientiously as guides and helps to holy living. Those who violate the conscience of the church do so at their own peril and to the hurt of the witness of the church. Culturally conditioned adaptations shall be referred to and approved by the Board of General Superintendents.

33.3. In listing practices to be avoided we recognize that no catalog, however inclusive, can hope to encompass all forms of evil throughout the world. Therefore it is imperative that our people earnestly seek the aid of the Spirit in cultivating a sensitivity to evil that transcends the mere letter of the law; remembering the admonition: “Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.” (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)

33.4. Our leaders and pastors are expected to give strong emphasis in our periodicals and from our pulpits to such fundamental biblical truths as will develop the faculty of discrimination between the evil and the good.

33.5. Education is of the utmost importance for the social and spiritual well-being of society. Public schools have a mandate to educate all. They are limited, however, as to their scope and, in fact, are prohibited by court rulings from teaching the basic tenets of Christianity. Nazarene educational organizations and institutions, such as Sunday Schools, schools (birth through secondary), child care centers, adult care centers, colleges, and seminaries, are expected to teach children, youth, and adults biblical principles and ethical standards in such a way that our doctrines may be known. This practice may be instead of or in addition to public schools, which often teach secular humanism and fall short of teaching principles of holy living. The education from public sources should be complemented by holiness teaching in the home. Christians should also be encouraged to work in and with public institutions to witness to and influence these institutions for God’s kingdom. (Matthew 5:13-14)

34. We hold specifically that the following practices should be avoided:

34.1. Entertainments that are subversive of the Christian ethic. Our people, both as Christian individuals and in Christian family units, should govern themselves by three principles. One is the Christian stewardship of leisure time. A second principle is the recognition of the Christian obligation

to apply the highest moral standards of Christian living. Because we are living in a day of great moral confusion in which we face the potential encroachment of the evils of the day into the sacred precincts of our homes through various avenues such as current literature, radio, television, personal computers, and the Internet, it is essential that the most rigid safeguards be observed to keep our homes from becoming secularized and worldly. However, we hold that entertainment that endorses and encourages holy living and affirms scriptural values should be affirmed and encouraged. We especially encourage our young people to use their gifts in media and the arts to influence positively this pervasive part of culture. The third principle is the obligation to witness against whatever trivializes or blasphemes God, as well as such social evils as violence, sensuality, pornography, profanity, and the occult, as portrayed by and through the commercial entertainment industry in its many forms and to endeavor to bring about the demise of enterprises known to be the purveyors of this kind of entertainment. This would include the avoidance of all types of entertainment ventures and media productions that produce, promote, or feature the violent, the sensual, the pornographic, the profane, or the occultic, or which feature or glamorize the world's philosophy of secularism, sensualism, and materialism and undermine God's standard of holiness of heart and life. This necessitates the teaching and preaching of these moral standards of Christian living, and that our people be taught to use prayerful discernment in continually choosing the "high road" of holy living. We therefore call upon our leaders and pastors to give strong emphasis in our periodicals and from our pulpits to such fundamental truths as will develop the principle of discrimination between the evil and good to be found in these media.

We suggest that the standard given to John Wesley by his mother, namely, "whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things, whatever increases the authority of your body over mind, that thing for you is sin," form the basis for this teaching of discrimination. (Manual 33.2-33.4, 903.12-3.14) (Romans 14:7-13; 1 Corinthians 10:31-33; Ephesians 5:1-18; Philippians 4:8-9; 1 Peter 1:13-17; 2 Peter 1:3-11)

34.2. Lotteries and other forms of gambling, whether legal or illegal. The church holds that the final result of these practices is detrimental both to the individual and society. (Matthew 6:24-34; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-11; Hebrews 13:5-6; 1 John 2:15-17)

34.3. Membership in oath-bound secret orders or societies. The quasi-religious nature of such organizations dilutes the Christian's commitment, and their secrecy contravenes the Christian's open witness. (1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 2 Corinthians 6:14—7:1; Ephesians 5:11-16; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17)

34.4. All forms of dancing that detract from spiritual growth and break down proper moral inhibitions and reserve. (Matthew 22:36-39; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 10:31-33; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 3:1-17)

34.5. The use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, or trafficking therein; giving influence to, or voting for, the licensing of places for the sale of the same; using illicit drugs or trafficking therein; using of tobacco in any of its forms, or trafficking therein.

In light of the Holy Scriptures and human experience concerning the ruinous consequences of the use of alcohol as a beverage, and in light of the findings of medical science regarding the detrimental effect of both alcohol and tobacco to the body and mind, as a community of faith committed to the pursuit of a holy life, our position and practice is abstinence rather than moderation. Holy Scripture teaches that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. With loving regard for ourselves and others, we call our people to total abstinence from all intoxicants.

Furthermore, our Christian social responsibility calls us to use any legitimate and legal means to minimize the availability of both beverage alcohol and tobacco to others. The widespread incidence of alcohol abuse in our world demands that we embody a position that stands as a witness to others. (Manual 903.12-3.14) (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29—24:2; Hosea 4:10-11; Habakkuk 2:5; Romans 13:8; 14:15-21; 15:1-2; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:9-12, 19-20; 10:31-33; Galatians 5:13-14, 21; Ephesians 5:18) (Only unfermented wine should be used in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.) (413.11, 427.7, 428.2, 429.1, 802)

34.6. The unprescribed use of hallucinogenics, stimulants, and depressants, and the misuse and abuse of regularly prescribed medicines. Only on competent medical advice and under medical supervision should such drugs be used. (Matthew 22:37-39; 27:34; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 9:24-27)

B. Marriage and Divorce and/or Dissolution of Marriage

(The meaning of divorce in this rule shall include "dissolution of marriage" when it is used as a legal substitute for divorce.)

35. The Christian family, knit together in a common bond through Jesus Christ, is a circle of love, fellowship, and worship to be earnestly cultivated in a society in which family ties are easily dissolved. We urge upon the ministry and congregations of our church such teachings and practices as will strengthen and develop family ties. In particular, we urge upon the ministry the importance of teaching and preaching clearly the biblical plan of the permanence of marriage. The institution of marriage was ordained by God in the time of man's innocence, and is, according to apostolic authority, "honorable in all;" it is the mutual union of one man and one woman for fellowship, helpfulness, and the propagation of the race. Our people should cherish this sacred estate as becomes Christians, and should enter it only after earnest prayer for divine direction, and when assured that the contemplated union is in accordance with scriptural requirements.

They should seek earnestly the blessings that God has ordained in connection with the wedded state, namely, holy companionship, parenthood, and mutual love—the elements of home building. The marriage covenant is morally binding so long as both shall live, and breaking of it is a breach of the divine plan of the permanence of marriage. (Genesis 1:26-28, 31; 2:21-24; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 19:3-9; John 2:1-11; Ephesians 5:21—6:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4)

35.1. In biblical teaching, marriage is the commitment of male and female to each other for life, reflecting Christ's sacrificial love for the Church. As such, marriage is intended to be permanent, and divorce an infraction of the clear teaching of Christ. Such infractions, however, are not beyond the forgiving grace of God when this is sought with repentance, faith and humility. It is recognized that some have divorce thrust upon them against their will or are compelled to resort to it for legal or physical protection. (Genesis 2:21-24; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 7:36-50, 16:18; John 7:53—8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 7:10-16; Ephesians 5:25-33)

35.2. Ministers of the Church of the Nazarene are instructed to give due care to matters relating to solemnizing marriages. They shall seek, in every manner possible, to convey to their congregations the sacredness of Christian marriage. They shall provide premarital counseling in every instance possible before performing a marriage ceremony including proper spiritual guidance for those who have experienced divorce. They shall only solemnize marriages of persons having the biblical basis for marriage. (107-7.1)

35.3. Members of the Church of the Nazarene are to seek prayerfully a redemptive course of action when involved in marital unhappiness, in full harmony with their vows and the clear teachings of the Scripture, their aim being to save the home and safeguard the good name of both Christ and His Church. Couples having serious marital problems are urged to seek counsel and guidance of their pastor and/or any other appropriate spiritual leaders. Failure to comply with this procedure in good faith and with sincere endeavor to seek a Christian solution, and subsequent obtainment of divorce and remarriage, makes one or both parties subject to possible discipline as prescribed in 504-4.2 and 505-5.12.

35.4. Through ignorance, sin, and human frailties, many in our society fall short of the divine plan. We believe that Christ can redeem these persons even as He did the woman at Samaria's well, and that sin against God's design for marriage does not place one beyond the forgiving grace of the gospel. Where a marriage has been dissolved and remarriage has followed, the marriage partners are enjoined to seek the grace of God and His redemptive help in their marriage relation. Such persons may be received into the membership of the church at such time as they have given evidence of their

regeneration and an awareness of their understanding of the sanctity of Christian marriage. (27, 107.1)

C. Sanctity of Human Life

36. The Church of the Nazarene believes in the sanctity of human life and strives to protect against abortion, embryonic stem cell research, euthanasia, and the withholding of reasonable medical care to handicapped or elderly.

Induced Abortion. The Church of the Nazarene affirms the sanctity of human life as established by God the Creator and believes that such sanctity extends to the child not yet born. Life is a gift from God. All human life, including life developing in the womb, is created by God in His image and is, therefore, to be nurtured, supported, and protected. From the moment of conception, a child is a human being with all of the developing characteristics of human life, and this life is dependent on the mother for its continued development.

Therefore, we believe that human life must be respected and protected from the moment of conception. We oppose induced abortion by any means, when used for either personal convenience or population control. We oppose laws that allow abortion. Realizing that there are rare, but real medical conditions wherein the mother or the unborn child, or both, could not survive the pregnancy, termination of the pregnancy should only be made after sound medical and Christian counseling.

Responsible opposition to abortion requires our commitment to the initiation and support of programs designed to provide care for mothers and children. The crisis of an unwanted pregnancy calls for the community of believers (represented only by those for whom knowledge of the crisis is appropriate) to provide a context of love, prayer, and counsel. In such instances, support can take the form of counseling centers, homes for expectant mothers, and the creation or utilization of Christian adoption services.

The Church of the Nazarene recognizes that consideration of abortion as a means of ending an unwanted pregnancy often occurs because Christian standards of sexual responsibility have been ignored. Therefore the church calls for persons to practice the ethic of the New Testament as it bears upon human sexuality and to deal with the issue of abortion by placing it within the larger framework of biblical principles that provide guidance for moral decision making. (Genesis 2:7, 9:6; Exodus 20:13; 21:12-16, 22-25; Leviticus 18:21; Job 31:15; Psalms 22:9; 139:3-16; Isaiah 44:2, 24; 49:5; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:15, 23-25, 36-45; Acts 17:25; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:16; 7:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6)

The Church of the Nazarene also recognizes that many have been affected by the tragedy of abortion. Each local congregation and individual believer is urged to offer the message of forgiveness by God for each person who has experienced abortion. Our local congregations are to be communities of redemption and hope to all who suffer physical, emotional, and spiritual pain as a result of the willful termination of a pregnancy. (Romans 3:22-24; Galatians 6:1)

Genetic Engineering and Gene Therapy. The Church of the Nazarene supports the use of genetic engineering to achieve gene therapy. We recognize that gene therapy can lead to preventing and curing disease, and preventing and curing anatomical and mental disorders. We oppose any use of genetic engineering that promotes social injustice, disregards the dignity of persons, or that attempts to achieve racial, intellectual, or social superiority over others (Eugenics). We oppose initiation of DNA studies whose results might encourage or support human abortion as an alternative to term live birth. In all cases, humility, a respect for the inviolable dignity of human life, human equality before God, and a commitment to mercy and justice should govern genetic engineering and gene therapy. (Micah 6:8)

Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research and Other Medical/Scientific Endeavors that Destroy Human Life after Conception. The Church of the Nazarene strongly encourages the scientific community to aggressively pursue advances in stem cell technology obtained from sources such as adult human tissues, placenta, umbilical cord blood, animal sources, and other nonhuman

embryonic sources. This has the righteous end of attempting to bring healing to many, without violating the sanctity of human life. Our stand on human embryonic stem cell research flows from our affirmation that the human embryo is a person made in the image of God. Therefore, we oppose the use of stem cells produced from human embryos for research, therapeutic interventions, or any other purpose.

As future scientific advances make new technologies available, we strongly support this research when it does not violate the sanctity of human life or other moral, biblical laws. However, we oppose the destruction of human embryos for any purpose and any type of research that takes the life of a human after conception. Consistent with this view, we oppose the use, for any purpose, of tissue derived from aborted human fetuses.

Human Cloning. We oppose the cloning of an individual human being. Humankind is valued by God, who created us in His image, and the cloning of an individual human being treats that being as an object, thus denying the personal dignity and worth bestowed on us by our Creator. (Genesis 1:27)

Euthanasia (Including Physician Assisted Suicide).

We believe that euthanasia (intentionally ending the life of a terminally ill person, or one who has a debilitating and incurable disease that is not immediately life-threatening, for the purpose of ending suffering) is incompatible with the Christian faith. This applies when euthanasia is requested or consented to by the terminally ill person (voluntary euthanasia) and when the terminally ill person is not mentally competent to give consent (involuntary euthanasia). We believe that the historic rejection of euthanasia by the Christian church is confirmed by Christian convictions that derive from the Bible and that are central to the Church's confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. Euthanasia violates Christian confidence in God as the sovereign Lord of life by claiming sovereignty for oneself; it violates our role as stewards before God; it contributes to an erosion of the value the Bible places on human life and community; it attaches too much importance to the cessation of suffering; and it reflects a human arrogance before a graciously sovereign God. We urge our people to oppose all efforts to legalize euthanasia.

Allowing to Die. When human death is imminent, we believe that either withdrawing or not originating artificial life-support systems is permissible within the range of Christian faith and practice. This position applies to persons who are in a persistent vegetative state and to those for whom the application of extraordinary means for prolonging life provide no reasonable hope for a return to health. We believe that when death is imminent, nothing in the Christian faith requires that the process of dying be artificially postponed. As Christians we trust in God's faithfulness and have the hope of eternal life. This makes it possible for Christians to accept death as an expression of faith in Christ who overcame death on our behalf and robbed it of its victory.

D. Human Sexuality

37. The Church of the Nazarene views human sexuality as one expression of the holiness and beauty that God the Creator intended for His creation. It is one of the ways by which the covenant between a husband and a wife is sealed and expressed. Christians are to understand that in marriage human sexuality can and ought to be sanctified by God. Human sexuality achieves fulfillment only as a sign of comprehensive love and loyalty. Christian husbands and wives should view sexuality as a part of their much larger commitment to one another and to Christ from whom the meaning of life is drawn.

The Christian home should serve as a setting for teaching children the sacred character of human sexuality and for showing them how its meaning is fulfilled in the context of love, fidelity, and patience.

Our ministers and Christian educators should state clearly the Christian understanding of human sexuality, urging Christians to celebrate its rightful excellence, and rigorously to guard against its betrayal and distortion.

Sexuality misses its purpose when treated as an end in itself or when cheapened by using another person to satisfy pornographic and perverted sexual interests. We view all forms of sexual intimacy

that occur outside the covenant of heterosexual marriage as sinful distortions of the holiness and beauty God intended for it.

Homosexuality is one means by which human sexuality is perverted. We recognize the depth of the perversion that leads to homosexual acts but affirm the biblical position that such acts are sinful and subject to the wrath of God. We believe the grace of God sufficient to overcome the practice of homosexuality (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). We deplore any action or statement that would seem to imply compatibility between Christian morality and the practice of homosexuality.

We urge clear preaching and teaching concerning Bible standards of sexual morality. (Genesis 1:27; 19:1-25; Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:8-10)

E. Christian Stewardship

38. Meaning of Stewardship. The Scriptures teach that God is the Owner of all persons and all things. We, therefore, are His stewards of both life and possessions. God's ownership and our stewardship ought to be acknowledged, for we shall be held personally accountable to God for the exercise of our stewardship. God, as a God of system and order in all of His ways, has established a system of giving that acknowledges His ownership over all human resources and relationships. To this end all His children should faithfully tithe and present offerings for the support of the gospel. (Manual 140) (Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:24-34; 25:31-46; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 12:13-24; 19:11-27; John 15:1-17; Romans 12:1-13; 1 Corinthians 9:7-14; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:6-15; 1 Timothy 6:6-19; Hebrews 7:8; James 1:27; 1 John 3:16-18)

38.1. Storehouse Tithing. Storehouse tithing is a scriptural and practical performance of faithfully and regularly placing the tithe into that church to which the member belongs.

Therefore, the financing of the church shall be based on the plan of storehouse tithing, and the local Church of the Nazarene shall be regarded by all of its people as the storehouse. All who are a part of the Church of the Nazarene are urged to contribute faithfully one-tenth of all their increase as a minimum financial obligation to the Lord and freewill offerings in addition as God has prospered them for the support of the whole church, local, district, educational, and general. The tithe, provided to the local Church of the Nazarene, shall be considered a priority over all other giving opportunities which God may lay upon the hearts of His faithful stewards, in support of the whole church.

38.2. Fund-raising and Distribution. In the light of the scriptural teaching concerning the giving of tithes and offerings for the support of the gospel, and for the erection of church buildings, no Nazarene church should engage in any method of fund-raising that would detract from these principles, hinder the gospel message, sully the name of the church, discriminate against the poor, or misdirect the people's energies from promoting the gospel. In disbursing to meet the requirements of the local, district, educational, and general programs of the Church of the Nazarene, local churches are urged to adopt and practice a financial apportionment plan, and to pay general, educational, and district apportionments monthly. (130, 154, 155-55.2, 413.21)

38.3. Support of the Ministry. "In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:14). The church is obligated to support its ministers, who have been called of God, and who, under the direction of the church, have given themselves wholly to the work of the ministry. We urge therefore that the members of the church voluntarily commit themselves to the task of supporting the ministry by gathering money weekly for this holy business and that the pastor's salary be paid regularly every week. (115.4)

38.4. Life Income Gifts, Planned and Deferred Giving.

It is essential in the exercise of Christian stewardship that careful thought be given as to what shall be done with one's income and possessions over which the Lord makes the Christian a steward during this life. The Church of the Nazarene, recognizing the need for faithful stewardship in this life and the God-given vision to leave a legacy for the future, has established the Church of the Nazarene Foundation to enhance Christian stewardship through planned and deferred giving. Civil laws often do not provide for the distribution of an estate in such a way as to glorify God. Each Christian should give

attention to the preparation of a last will and testament in a careful and legal manner, and the Church of the Nazarene through its various ministries of missions, evangelism, education, and benevolences—local, district, educational, and general—is recommended for consideration.

F. Church Officers

39. We direct our local churches to elect as church officers only persons who profess the experience of entire sanctification and whose lives bear public witness to the grace of God that calls us to a holy life; who are in harmony with the doctrines, polity, and practices of the Church of the Nazarene; and who support the local church faithfully in attendance and with tithes and offerings. (113.9-13.10, 127, 145, 146)

G. Rules of Order

40. Subject to the applicable law, the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws of government in the *Manual*, the meetings and proceedings of the members of the Church of the Nazarene, local, district, and general, and the committees of the corporation shall be regulated and controlled according to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (latest edition) for parliamentary procedure. (113, 203, 300.3)

H. Amending the Covenant of Christian Conduct

41. The provisions of the Covenant of Christian Conduct may be repealed or amended when concurred in by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting of a given General Assembly.