

Men's Retreat

Conference Point Center-
Williams Bay, WI

March 10-11, 2023



“Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are the work of your hand.” (Isaiah 64:8)

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What Kind of Christian Am I? A Personal Assessment

Spiritual maturity is not about age.
 Spiritual maturity is not about achievements.
 Spiritual maturity is not about appearance.

Immature Christians

Feel more guilty for missing church than hurting his neighbor.
 Believe the Bible is more important than Jesus.
 Wondering how close they can get to sin without actually sinning.
 Believing that's OK to hold grudge against someone if he or she hurts them bad enough.
 Believing real Christians would never engage real sinners.
 Believing God rests in a building, not in a group of people.
 Thinking that Christian maturity is more about how much they know than what they do.

Mature Christians

The highs and lows of life do not impact their relationship with God.
 They find value in the quotidian and trivial seasons of life.
 They are at peace with situations beyond their control.
 Practice spiritual disciplines on the daily basis.
 They maintain a childlike sense of wonder and awe.
 They do not compare themselves to others.
 They listen to others who have a different viewpoint...with the goal of growing and not correcting.
 They understand Christianity does not have an on/off switch.
 They have a sustainable rhythm to their life.

What Is Spiritual Formation and Why We Need It?

What Spiritual Formation is NOT

What IS Spiritual Formation

Spiritual Formation is the process of being conforming to the image of Christ for the glory of God and for the sake of others.

2 Corinthians 3:18—"*We all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*" (NIV)

1. Believers will be transformed into the likeness of Christ.
2. The transformation process is a lifetime ongoing process.
3. It is Trinitarian in nature.
4. The Holy Spirit is involved in the transformation process.
5. God's glory is restored when the above take place. (Tang, 2014, p.79).

The Goals of Spiritual Formation

Believers acquiring a Christlikeness at the personal level.
 Believers becoming a people of God at the community level.
 Believers establishing the Kingdom of God at the missional level.

Relational Spirituality

Spiritual Disciplines

Solitude and Silence

Solitude—

Silence—

Prayer, Study, and Meditation

Prayer—

Study—

Meditation—

Fasting and Chastity

Fasting—

Chastity—

Confession, Submission, and Guidance

Confession—

Submission—

Guidance—

Simplicity, Stewardship, and Sacrifice

Simplicity—

Stewardship—

Sacrifice—

Worship and Celebration

Worship—

Celebration—

Service and Witness

Service—

Witness—

Personal Application

1. Place a check beside the disciplines you have engaged in.
2. Which are your *least* drawn to? Place a dash beside those.

3. Pick two disciplines you'll plan to engage from now on, and decide how and when you'll practice them. Try to pick at least one that you are either inexperienced in or less drawn to.

Discipline	How I will practice it	When
Discipline 1		
Discipline 2		

Spiritual disciplines are useful but not essential. "...*Christian spiritual formation has nothing essentially to do with such practice. Many of these practices are useful, to be sure, and some are more useful than others. But none is essential. What is essential is life with Jesus, interactive relationship with the great God of the universe, inner transformation into Christlikeness.*" (Richard Foster, PRAYER: Finding the Heart's True Home)

1. Loving God Completely

God's love for us

Loving God Completely

Knowing God Clearly

Loving Him More Dearly

Follow Him More Closely

Personal Application

Prayerfully ask yourself these three questions and answer them:

1. Do I know God's will for my life? How willing am I to do His will? Personal example:
2. Do I know the things He loves? Do I love them, too? Personal example:
3. Do I recognize and choose the things He sets before me? Personal example:

2. Loving Ourselves Correctly

Loving ourselves correctly means seeing ourselves as God sees us!

Seeing Ourselves As God Sees Us

Apart from Christ, we have nothing and do nothing of eternal value (John 15:5). This is contrary to our culture.

Who Does God Say I Am?

I am a child of God (John 1:12); a branch of the true vine (John 15:1,5); a friend of Jesus (John 15:15); I have been justified and redeemed (Rom. 3:24); My old self was crucified with Christ, and

I am no longer a slave to sin (Rom. 6:6); I will not be condemned by God (Rom. 8:1); I have been set free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:2); As a child of God, I am a fellow heir with Christ (Rom. 8:17); I have been accepted by Christ (Rom. 15:7); I have been called to be a saint (1 Co. 1:2); In Christ Jesus I have wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Co. 1:30); My body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in me (1 Co. 3:16); The hardening of my mind has been removed in Christ (2 Co. 3:14); I am a new creature in Christ (2 Co. 5:17); I have been made one with all who are in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28); I am no longer a slave, but a child and an heir (Gal. 4:7); I have been set free in Christ (Gal. 5:1); I have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:3); I am chosen, holy, and blameless before God (Eph. 1:4); I have been sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13); Because of God's mercy and love, I have been made alive with Christ (Eph. 2:4-5); I am seated in the heavenly places with Christ (Eph. 2:6); I am a citizen of heaven (Phil. 3:20); The peace of God guards my heart and mind (Phil. 4:7); God supplies all my needs (Phil. 4:19); I have been made complete in Christ (Col. 2:10); I have been raised up with Christ (Col. 3:1); My life is hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3); I have been chosen of God, and I am holy and beloved (Col. 3:12); God loves me and has chosen me (1 Thess. 1:4).

Personal Application

1. To what degree I am defined by the world? By the Word? How can I develop my identity more fully in the latter?
2. What does it require to see myself as God sees me?
3. Which biblical affirmations resonate the most with me? Which seem the most remote to my experience? How can I make these more real in my thinking and practice?

3. Loving Others Compassionately

Christ's Example of Compassionate Love

The Risks and Rewards of Relationships

- *the very resourceful people (VRPs)*
- *the very important people (VIPs)*
- *the very trainable people (VTPs)*
- *the very nice people (VNPs)*
- *the very draining people (VDPs)*

Personal Application

How do you treat the difficult people in your life?

To what extent do you think you may be harboring resentment and unforgiveness because of what others have done? How will you address this issue?

Paradigm and Holistic Spirituality

Worldviews

Materialism claims that ultimate reality is material and that everything in the universe is the impersonal product of time and chance. Variations of this view: naturalism, atheism, and humanism.

Idealism claims that ultimate reality is not material but spiritual. However, this spiritual agent is not a personal being but the all-that-is. Variations of this view include monism, pantheism, transcendentalism, and the New Age movement.

Theism distinguished between the creation and the Creator and declares that ultimate reality is an infinite, intelligent, and personal Being. Christian theism affirms that this personal God has revealed himself in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Two Competing Paradigms

A **paradigm** is a way of seeing based on implicit or explicit rules that shape one's perspective. A paradigm shift takes place when the rules or boundaries change, so that we no longer see things from the same perspective; when the rules change, our way of seeing is altered.

Personal Application

1. Are you valuing anything earthly too high? (If so, what?)
2. Are you valuing anything that has eternal worth too little? (If so, what?)
3. What are the things that endure—the things that matter most from an eternal standpoint?
4. Read Hebrews 11:9-10 and 13:14. How do these verses depict an eternal perspective?

Holistic Spirituality

Holistic Spirituality stresses the centrality of Christ and His relevance to every component of our lives. This biblical alternative to a compartmentalization mentality focuses on the implications of Christ's lordship in such a way that even the most mundane components of life can become expressions of the life of Christ in us.

The Wisdom of Seeking Christ in all Things

Wisdom is a gem with many facets: insight, counsel, prudence, understanding, discernment, discipline, competence, discretion, instruction, guidance, knowledge, and righteousness. Hebrew word for wisdom is *chokmah*—**skill**. Wisdom is skill in the art of living life with each area under the dominion of God. It is the ability to use the best means at the best time to accomplish the best ends.

The fear of the Lord is reverence, is respect and humility. Awareness of His commands and obedience in following them.

An Integrated Life

1. *Materialism*—

2. *Thinking we know better*—

3. *Spiritual anemia*—

4. *Playing to the wrong audience*—

- Christ is **present** in their lives, but
- Christ is **preeminent** in their lives, but
- Christ is **preeminent**

Relationships and Holistic Spirituality

1. The Husband-Wife Relationship

2. The Parent-Child Relationship

3. Friendship

Personal Application

1. How often do you find yourself trying to play by two sets of rule? To what degree is there a tension between your profession and your practice?
2. If you are married, how would you evaluate your practice of the five aspects of love in your marital relationship? Which of the husband-wife principles need the most attention?
3. If you are a parent, which of the parent-child principles need the most attention in your parenting relationships?
4. On the spectrum of intimacy in friendship, how many established friendships do you think you have? Is there anyone with whom you have agreed to walk together for life in trust and loyalty?

Corporate Spirituality

Biblical Foundations for Community

The Nature and the Purpose of the Church

The Nature of the Church

The Purpose of the Church

Soul Care, Leadership, Accountability, and Renewal

Soul Care and Counseling

Servant Leadership

Accountability and Rule

Renewal

Personal Application

1. What experience have you had with spiritual care?
2. Why do you think servant leadership is so rarely practiced in churches?
3. Do you have genuine accountability in your life?
4. Have you encounter some of the elements of corporate renewal?

Conclusion—What It Takes to Finish Well

1. *Intimacy* with Christ
2. Fidelity in the spiritual *disciplines*
3. A biblical *perspective* on the circumstances of life
4. A spirit of *teachability*, responsiveness, humility, and obedience
5. A clear sense of personal *purpose* and calling
6. Healthy *relationships* with resourceful people
7. Ongoing *ministry* investment in the lives of others.