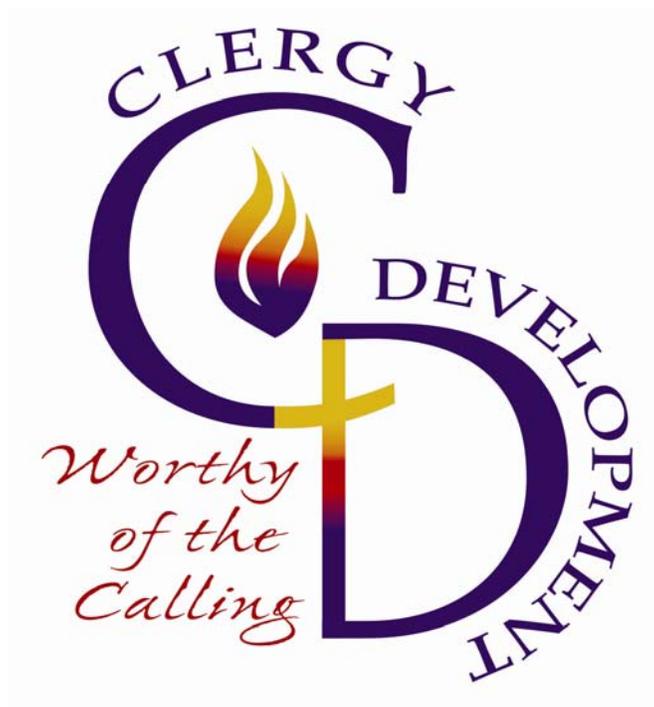


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Student Guide

# Practicing Wesleyan-Holiness Spiritual Formation



Clergy Development  
Church of the Nazarene  
Kansas City, Missouri  
816-333-7000 ext. 2468; 800-306-7651 (USA)  
2002

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The **Modular Course of Study** is an outcome-based curriculum designed to implement the educational paradigm defined by the Breckenridge Consultations. Clergy Development is responsible for maintaining and distributing the Modular Course of Study for the Church of the Nazarene.

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## Series Foreword

### **A Vision for Christian Ministry: Clergy Education in the Church of the Nazarene**

The chief purpose of all persons—indeed, all of the creation—is to worship, love, and serve God. God has made himself known in His deeds of creation and redemption. As the Redeemer, God has called into existence a people, the Church, who embody, celebrate, and declare His name and His ways. The life of God with His people and the world constitutes the Story of God. That story is recorded principally in the Old and New Testaments, and continues to be told by the resurrected Christ who lives and reigns as Head of His Church. The Church lives to declare the whole Story of God. This it does in many ways—in the lives of its members who are even now being transformed by Christ, through preaching, the sacraments, in oral testimony, and in mission. All members of the Body of Christ are called to exercise a ministry of witness and service. No one is excluded.

In God's own wisdom He calls some persons to fulfill the ministry of proclaiming the gospel and caring for God's people in a form that is referred to as the ordained ministry. God is the initial actor in this call, not humans. In the Church of the Nazarene we believe that God calls and that persons respond. They do not elect the Christian ministry. All persons whom God calls to the ordained ministry continue to be amazed that He would call them. They should continue to be humbled and amazed by God's call. The *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene states, "we recognize and hold that the Head of the Church calls some men and women to the more official and public work of the ministry." It adds, "The church, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, will recognize the Lord's call" (*Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, paragraph 400).

An ordained Christian minister has as his or her chief responsibility to declare in many ways the whole Story of God as fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. His or her charge is to "tend the flock of God . . . not under compulsion, but willingly, not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock" (1 Pet 5:2-3, NRSV). The minister fulfills this charge under the supervision of Christ, the chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4). Such ministry can be fulfilled only after a period of careful preparation. Indeed, given the ever-changing demands placed upon the minister, "preparation" never ceases.

A person who enters the Christian ministry becomes in a distinct sense a steward of the gospel of God (Titus 1:7). A steward is one who is entrusted to care for what belongs to another. A steward may be one who takes care of another person or who manages the property of someone else. All Christians are stewards of the grace of God. But in addition, in a peculiar sense a Christian minister is a steward of the "mystery of God," which is Christ, the Redeemer, the Messiah of God. In all faithfulness, the minister is called to "make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel" (Eph 6:19, NRSV). Like Paul, he or she must faithfully preach "the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" (Eph 3:8-10, NRSV).

In fulfilling this commission, there is plenty of room for diligence and alertness, but no room for laziness or privilege (Titus 1:5-9). Good stewards recognize that they are

stewards only, not the owners, and that they will give an account of their stewardship to the master. Faithfulness to one's charge and to the Lord who issued it is the steward's principal passion. When properly understood, the Christian ministry should never be thought of as a "job." It is ministry—uniquely Christian ministry. No higher responsibility or joy can be known than to become a steward of the Story of God in Christ's Church. The person who embraces God's call to the ordained ministry will stand in the company of the apostles, the Early Fathers of the Church, the Reformers of the Middle Ages, the Protestant Reformers, and many persons around the world today who joyfully serve as stewards of the gospel of God.

Obviously, one who does not recognize, or who understands but rejects, just how complete and inclusive a minister's stewardship must be should not start down the path that leads to ordination. In a peculiar sense, a Christian minister must in all respects model the gospel of God. He or she is to "shun" the love of money. Instead, the minister must "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness." He or she must "fight the good fight of the faith" and "take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called" (1 Tim 6: 11-12, NRSV).

Hence, the Church of the Nazarene believes that "the minister of Christ is to be in all things a pattern to the flock—in punctuality, discretion, diligence, earnestness; 'in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left' (2 Cor 6: 6-7)" (*Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, paragraph 401.1). The minister of Christ "must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, <sup>8</sup>but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, <sup>9</sup>holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching...able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict." (Titus 1: 7-9, NASB).

In order to be a good steward of God's Story one must, among other things, give oneself to careful and systematic study, both before and after ordination. This will occur not because he or she is forced to do so, but out of a love for God and His people, the world that He is working to redeem, and out of an inescapable sense of responsibility. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the attitude one brings to preparation for the ministry reveals much about what he or she thinks of God, the gospel, and Christ's Church. The God who became incarnate in Jesus and who made a way of salvation for all gave His very best in the life, death, and resurrection of His Son. In order to be a good steward, a Christian minister must respond in kind. Jesus told numerous parables about stewards who did not recognize the importance of what had been entrusted to them (Mt 21: 33-44; 25: 14-30; Mk 13: 34-37; Lk 12: 35-40; 19: 11-27; 20: 9-18).

Preparation—one's education in all its dimensions—for ministry in Christ's Church should be pursued in full light of the responsibility before God and His people that the ministry involves. This requires that one take advantage of the best educational resources at his or her disposal.

The Church of the Nazarene recognizes how large is the responsibility associated with the ordained Christian ministry and accepts it fully. Part of the way we recognize our responsibility before God is seen in the requirements we make for ordination and the practice of ministry. We believe that the call to and practice of Christian ministry is a gift, not a right or privilege. We believe that God holds a minister to the highest of religious, moral, personal, and professional standards. We are not reluctant to expect

that those standards be observed from the time of one's call until his or her death. We believe that Christian ministry should first be a form of worship. The practice of ministry is both an offering to God and a service to His Church. By the miracle of grace, the work of the ministry can become a means of grace for God's people (Rom 12: 1-3). One's education for ministry is also a form of worship.

The modules that comprise the Course of Study that may lead a person to candidacy for ordination have been carefully designed to prepare one for the kind of ministry we have described. Their common purpose is to provide a holistic preparation for entrance into the ordained Christian ministry. They reflect the Church's wisdom, experience, and responsibility before God. The modules show how highly the Church of the Nazarene regards the gospel, the people of God, the world for which Christ gave His life, and Christian ministry. Completing the modules will normally take three or four years. But no one should feel pressured to meet this schedule.

The careful study for which the modules call should show that before God and His Church one accepts the stewardly responsibility associated with ordained ministry.

## Acknowledgments

Every manual is the accumulation of effort by many people. Someone writes the original manuscript, others offer suggestions to strengthen the content and make the material more easily understood, and finally an editor formats the manual for publication. This manual is no different. Many people have contributed to this manual. Every effort has been made to accurately represent the original intent of the principal contributors.

Though many teachers, students, and editors have given valuable input into this course, the principal creator and writer was Wesley D. Tracy. Dr. Tracy has field-tested many of the course materials in classes in North America and in Manila at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary.

Wesley Tracy has coauthored several books on spiritual formation. *The Upward Call: Spiritual Formation and the Holy Life*, written with Morris Weigelt, Janine Tartaglia, and Dee Freeborn, was published in 1994 by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and has gone through several printings in English and Spanish. Dr. Tracy was the principal author of *Reflecting God*, a layman's textbook on spiritual formation published by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and the Christian Holiness Partnership and sponsored by the 23 supporting denominations of CHP. This book is supported by three other items written by Wesley Tracy: *The Reflecting God Workbook*, *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*, and *The Reflecting God Journal*.

Dr. Tracy holds five higher education degrees, including degrees from Southern Nazarene University, Nazarene Theological Seminary, and two doctorates from San Francisco Theological Seminary. He has published more than 1,000 articles and has written or coauthored some 25 books. He has served as a pastor, as editor of eight Christian periodicals, and as an educator at MidAmerica Nazarene University, Nazarene Theological Seminary, as well as special adult education projects in Europe, Latin America, and Asia.

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# **Syllabus**

## **Practicing Wesleyan-Holiness Spiritual Formation**

**Educational Institution, Setting or Sponsoring Agency:**

**Location of the Course:**

**Course Dates:**

**Name of the Learning Leader:**

**Learning Leader's Address, Telephone, and E-mail Address:**

**Course Vision Statement:**

What if the learning leader and students really opened their minds and hearts to all that God may want to do during this course? Suppose God wanted to launch a life-changing transforming movement of faith, fervor, and devotion that we cannot now even imagine through the experiences of this course.

Therefore, the vision statement begins with a call to the learning leader and students to put themselves at the disposal of God, the Holy Spirit. Let us make ourselves His—His if He wants to set us on fire for Christ. His if the Lord chooses to bless us with His silence. His if He seems to hide beyond the clouds beyond the reach of our prayers (Lam 3:44). His even if God's silence can become for us a time of fertile emptiness in which we examine ourselves, submit to transformation, and imagine new beginnings. Let us be open to all the possibilities of grace.

While we look for whatever bonuses and blessings God has for us beyond the printed page and our dialogues, we set these objectives for this course.

1. What should the students come to KNOW?

The content and knowledge aims (cognitive aims) of this course include:

- A growing understanding of the biblical and theological foundations for spiritual formation
- An enlarged perception of the grace of God experienced in transforming moments and the transforming journey
- The ability to define, explain, and teach the personal and corporate spiritual disciplines and devotional skills
- To understand that Christian service is a spiritual discipline

2. What should the students inwardly EMBRACE (BE)?

The affective aims of the course include:

- Embracing the call to the journey of transformation, owning it as their own call to holiness and Christlikeness
- Identifying themselves with the mission of Christ in this world
- Desiring to share the spirit gifts of God with others

3. What should students, as a result of and in response to this course, DO?  
The psychomotor objectives of the course include:
  - Demonstrating their growing knowledge by successfully completing written and verbal exercises
  - Demonstrating, in class and beyond the classroom in formal and informal ways, a growing desire to make the quest for Christlikeness the central aim of life
  - Incorporating into their formal and informal acts of ministry, both now and in the future, the principles of spiritual formation encountered in this course

## **Educational Assumptions**

1. The work of the Holy Spirit of Christ is essential to any process of Christian education at any level. We will consistently request and expect the Spirit's presence within and among us.
2. Christian teaching and learning is best done in the context of community (people being and working together). Community is the gift of the Spirit but may be enhanced or hindered by human effort. Communities have common values, stories, practices, and goals. Explicit effort will be invested to enhance community within the class. Base Groups and other group work will take place in every lesson.
3. Every adult student has knowledge and experience to contribute to the class. We learn not only from the learning leader and the reading assignments, but also from each other. Each student is valued not only as a learner but also as a teacher. That is one reason that so many exercises in this course are cooperative and collaborative in nature.
4. Journaling is an ideal way to bring theory and practice together as students synthesize the principles and content of the lessons with their own experiences, preferences, and ideas.
5. One universal teaching-learning device is storytelling. Stories almost always mean more than they say. Thus they inspire reflection, analysis, and dialogue. Stories usually have more than one level of meaning. Thus, everyone can relate at some level to the story.

## **Outcome Statements**

This module contributes to the development of the following abilities as defined in the *U.S. Sourcebook for Ministerial Development*.

### **PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

- CN23 Ability to identify and explain the Doctrine of Holiness from a Wesleyan perspective
- CP21 Ability to envision, order, participate, and lead in contextualized theologically grounded worship, and to develop and lead appropriate services for special occasions (i.e. weddings, funeral, baptism, and Lord's Supper)
- CH6 Ability to pursue holy character (Christlikeness) by practicing Christian formation and the classic spiritual disciplines as means of grace
- CH7 Ability to locate, understand, and use the resources for individual and corporate spiritual formation
- CH8 Ability to take responsibility for his or her own continuing spiritual development
- CH9 Ability to apply understanding of his or her ongoing developmental needs across the life course of the minister to the pursuit of holy character

- CH10 Ability to demonstrate a realistic self-understanding including personal strengths, gifts, weaknesses, and areas of needed growth
- CN19 Ability to identify and explain the main characteristics of the nature of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Human Person, Sin, Salvation, the Christian Life, the Church and Sacraments, and Eschatology

#### ADDITIONAL OUTCOME STATEMENTS

- Ability to partner with a mentor/mentee community for accountability concerning spiritual growth, personal development, and ethical behavior
- Ability to explain the history and movements of Christian spirituality
- Ability to become acquainted with diverse spiritual disciplines
- Ability to sustain spiritual growth throughout the student's life
- Ability to learn the classical and contemporary devotional literature
- Ability to distinguish the difference between faddish "spiritualities" and distinctively, truly Christian spirituality
- Ability to discern and nurture God's call on one's life to fulfill His mission within the community of faith

### Recommended Reading

Throughout the course many sources are recommended. Though we have no official textbook, the following are especially recommended. The Greathouse book is a biblical theology of holiness. The others are Wesleyan spiritualities organized according to the *ordo salutis*, the plan of salvation.

William Greathouse. *Wholeness in Christ*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1998.

Wesley Tracy, E. Dee Freeborn, Janine Tartaglia, Morris Weigelt. *The Upward Call: Spiritual Formation and the Holy Life*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000.

Wesley Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*.

Wesley Tracy, *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*.

Wesley Tracy, *The Reflecting God Journal* (available 2002).

### Course Requirements

- 1. Class attendance, attention, and participation** are especially important. Students are responsible for all assignments and in-class work. Much of the work in this course is Base Group work. Cooperative, small-group work cannot be made up. That makes attendance imperative. Even if one does extra reading or writing the values of discussion, dialogue, and learning from each other are thwarted. If one or more lessons are missed, the learning leader will require extra work before completion can be acknowledged. If three or more classes are missed, the student will be required to repeat the whole module.
- 2. Base Group Work.** Nothing is more important in this course than the Base Group work. The class members will be assigned to Base Groups of three to four students each. The group members will serve as study partners for many group explorations and discussion throughout the module. Base Groups will stay together for the whole course or the learning leader may reorganize them after Unit 2, at his or her discretion. Each Base Group should have persons assigned to the following roles.

- *Leader-Convener*—presides at all meetings, in class or beyond the class. Represents his or her group to the learning leader. Takes general responsibility for the progress of the group. Keeps members on-task during meetings.
- *Recorder*—takes notes and keeps records of important decisions, topics, and events in a “group life” journal (nothing formal, a legal pad or three-ring notebook or laptop computer will do fine).
- *Reporter*—the spokesperson for the group when report, teaching, and sharing times come. He or she does not have to do all the talking and may recruit his or her group members to help with the reports.
- *Pastor*—serves as the encourager, peacemaker, and healer of hurt feelings. Contacts absentees. Leads devotional exercises for the group in classroom and beyond-the-classroom meetings.

If the class is small, the Base Groups may have only three members. The office of “pastor” would then be omitted.

### 3. Assignments

**Journaling:** The only “term assignment” is your journal. It is to be used regularly, if not daily. On two occasions during the term the journals will be checked by the learning leader. One whole session is given to journaling as a spiritual discipline, but journaling begins with the first class meeting. Each week the homework assignment includes “Journal Prompts,” which start you on interpretation and application of the themes of the lesson.

The journal should become the student’s friend and treasury of insights, devotions, and ideas. Here the integration of theory and practice occurs. The spiritual life nature of the journal helps guard against the course of study being merely academic as you are repeatedly called upon to apply the principles studied to your own heart and your own ministry situation.

This journal is not a diary, not a catchall. It is, rather, a guided journal or a focused journal in which the educational experience and its implications are selected for reflection and writing.

The framers of this curriculum are concerned about the way that students fall into learning “about” the Bible, or “about” the spiritual life rather than learning—that is coming to know and internalize the Bible and spiritual principles. The journaling experience ensures that the “Be” component of “Be, Know, and Do” is present in the course of study. Be faithful with all journaling assignments.

**Daily Work:** This course has regular homework assignments. It is called daily work because even though the class may meet once a week the student should be working on the course on a “daily” basis. Sometimes the homework assignments are quite heavy. The assignments are important. Even if homework is not discussed in class every session, the work is to be handed in. This gives the learning leader regular information about the student’s progress in the course. That is much to be preferred to waiting until a final exam or a term paper reveals only at the end of the course that a student is having difficulty.

The normal time for homework to be handed in is at the beginning of each class session. All assignments are to be completed.

Some daily work is not homework. At several times during the course students will be asked to write a “two-minute” paper on the theme right there in class. Whatever you write is to be handed in. This is not to catch you by surprise. It helps you synthesize the lesson information and it helps your learning leader know whether or not communication is taking place. In-class and homework assignments sometimes give the student a choice of assignments among several options. This recognizes that students have different learning styles.

## Course Outline and Schedule

The class will meet for 30 hours according to the following schedule:

| Session Date | Session Time |
|--------------|--------------|
|              |              |
|              |              |
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### Unit 1: Foundations for Spiritual Formation

1. What Is Spiritual Formation?
2. Who Needs Transformation?
3. Three Key Questions
4. Devastated by Sin
5. What Is God Like?
6. What’s So Special About Jesus?

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### Unit 2: Transforming Grace

7. Transforming Moment: A New Start with a New Heart
8. Sanctifying Grace: The Transforming Moment
9. Sanctification: The Transforming Journey

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### Unit 3: The Personal Spiritual Disciplines

10. Three Ways to Read the Bible
11. Prayer: Adoration, Praise, and Thanksgiving
12. Prayer: Confession, Intercession, and Petition
13. Journaling as a Spiritual Discipline
14. Fasting and the Disciplines of Abstinence

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### Unit 4: The Spiritual Disciplines of Community

15. Formative Christian Worship
16. The Sacramental Means of Grace
17. Companions on the Spiritual Journey
18. Faith Mentors and Soul Friends

## Unit 5: The Spiritual Disciplines of Service

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19. The Spiritual Disciplines of Service

20. Wesleyan-Holiness Spirituality: An Overview

### Course Evaluation

The learning leader, the course itself, and the student's progress will be evaluated. These evaluations will be made in several ways.

The progress of students will be evaluated with an eye for enhancing the learning experience by:

1. Carefully observing the Base Group work, noting the competence of reports, the balance of discussion, the quality of the relationships, the cooperation level, and the achievement of assigned tasks
2. Noting in-class assignments of art, writing, analysis, and discussion
3. Careful reading of homework assignments
4. Journal checks

The evaluation of the course materials and the teacher will be evaluated by:

1. Frequently asking and discussing the effectiveness and relevance of a certain method, experience, story, lecture, or other activity.
2. The curriculum and the teaching will be evaluated by all students using the questionnaire that is a part of the last lesson of the course.

Some evaluation cannot be made during the class itself. Some objectives will not be measurable for years to come. If students encounter the transforming power of God at deeper levels than ever before, learn devotional skills and practice them with discipline, and incorporate the best of this course into their own ministries, the fruit of this educational endeavor could go on for a long time. In truth, that is what we expect.

### Additional Information

A reasonable effort to assist every student will be made. Any student who has handicaps, learning disabilities, or other conditions that make the achievement of the class requirements exceedingly difficult should make an appointment with the learning leader as soon as possible to see what special arrangements can be made. Any student who is having trouble understanding the assignments, lectures, or other learning activities should talk to the learning leader to see what can be done to help.

### Learning Leader's Availability

Good faith efforts to serve the students both in and beyond the classroom will be made.

## **Journaling: A Tool for Personal Reflection and Integration**

Participating in the course of study is the heart of your preparation for ministry. To complete each course you will be required to listen to lectures, read several books, participate in discussions, write papers, and take exams. Content mastery is the goal.

An equally important part of ministerial preparation is spiritual formation. Some might choose to call spiritual formation devotions, while others might refer to it as growth in grace. Whichever title you place on the process, it is the intentional cultivation of your relationship with God. The course work will be helpful in adding to your knowledge, your skills, and your ability to do ministry. The spiritually formative work will weave all you learn into the fabric of your being, allowing your education to flow freely from your head to your heart to those you serve.

Although there are many spiritual disciplines to help you cultivate your relationship with God, journaling is the critical skill that ties them all together. Journaling simply means keeping a record of your experiences and the insights you have gained along the way. It is a discipline because it does require a good deal of work to faithfully spend time daily in your journal. Many people confess that this is a practice they tend to push aside when pressed by their many other responsibilities. Even five minutes a day spent journaling can make a major difference in your education and your spiritual development. Let me explain.

Consider journaling as time spent with your best friend. Onto the pages of a journal you will pour out your candid responses to the events of the day, the insights you gained from class, a quote gleaned from a book, an ah-ha that came to you as two ideas connected. This is not the same as keeping a diary, since a diary seems to be a chronicle of events without the personal dialogue. The journal is the repository for all of your thoughts, reactions, prayers, insights, visions, and plans. Though some people like to keep complex journals with sections for each type of reflection, others find a simple running commentary more helpful. In either case, record the date and the location at the beginning of every journal entry. It will help you when it comes time to review your thoughts.

It is important to chat briefly about the logistics of journaling. All you will need is a pen and paper to begin. Some folks prefer loose-leaf paper that can be placed in a three-ring binder, others like spiral-bound notebooks, while others enjoy using composition books. Whichever style you choose, it is important to develop a pattern that works for you.

Establishing a time and a place for writing in your journal is essential. If there is no space etched out for journaling, it will not happen with the regularity needed to make it valuable. It seems natural to spend time journaling after the day is over and you can sift through all that has transpired. Yet, family commitments, evening activities, and fatigue militate against this time slot. Morning offers another possibility. Sleep filters much of the previous day's experiences, and processes deep insights, that can be recorded first thing in the morning. In conjunction with devotions, journaling enables you to begin to weave your experiences with the Word, and also with course material that has been steeping on the back burner of your mind. You will probably find that carrying your journal will allow you to jot down ideas that come to you at odd times throughout the day.

It seems that we have been suggesting that journaling is a handwritten exercise. Some may be wondering about doing their work on a computer. Traditionally, there is a special bond between hand, pen, and paper. It is more personal, direct, aesthetic. And it is flexible, portable, and available.

With regular use, your journal is the repository of your journey. As important as it is to make daily entries, it is equally important to review your work. Read over each week's record at the end of the week. Make a summary statement and note movements of the Holy Spirit or your own growth. Do a monthly review of your journal every 30 days. This might best be done on a half-day retreat where you can prayerfully focus on your thoughts in solitude and silence. As you do this, you will begin to see the accumulated value of the Word, your course work, and your experience in ministry all coming together in ways you had not considered possible. This is integration, weaving together faith development with learning. Integration moves information from your head to your heart so that ministry is a matter of being rather than doing. Journaling will help you answer the central question of education: "Why do I do what I do when I do it?"

Journaling really is the linchpin in ministerial preparation. Your journal is the chronicle of your journey into spiritual maturity as well as content mastery. These volumes will hold the rich insights that will pull your education together. A journal is the tool for integration. May you treasure the journaling process!

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*We all shrivel up like a leaf, and like  
the wind our sins sweep us away.*  
Isaiah 64: 6

*We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
each of us has turned to his own way.*  
Isaiah 53: 6

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,  
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*  
John 3: 16

## **UNIT 1**

### ***Foundations for Spiritual Formation***

1. What Is Spiritual Formation?
2. Who Needs Transformation?
3. Three Key Questions
4. Devastated by Sin
5. What Is God Like?
6. What's So Special About Jesus?

#### **Unit 1 Objectives**

To help students

1. (Cognitive) develop an adequate understanding of the biblical and theological underpinnings of Spiritual Formation theory, including a working knowledge of the human condition, human identity and purpose, the nature of God and His call in Christ to spiritual transformation and formation, demonstrating the same by successfully completing the assignments of this unit
2. (Affective) embrace the call to the transforming journey, owning it as one's own quest for Christlikeness and demonstrating this passion in formal and informal ways both in the class and beyond the classroom
3. (Psychomotor) examine their own hearts, admit deep needs, praise God for grace already received, and open their hearts to new encounters with God, identify with the mission of Christ in the world by incorporating insights of the educational experience into their daily lives and into their ministry activities

# Lesson 1: What Is Spiritual Formation?

## Due this Lesson

None

## Learner Objectives

To help students

- be able to define and explain the key concepts of *transformation* and *spiritual formation*, as they will be used in this class
- appreciate the “big picture” of this course and embrace the study of their own spiritual journey
- know each other better, and form course-long Base Groups of study partners

## Homework Assignments

### Choose an Assignment

Given the fact that we each have preferred learning styles, you have a choice. Each student is to complete one of the following and hand in the report at our next meeting. Or the assignment can be sent to the Learning Leader by e-mail.

- Bible Study: Read the story of Abraham or Joseph in Genesis and write a two-page paper on the character development you notice. That is to say, write about the gradual transformation of Abraham or Joseph.
- Key Concepts: After considering the content of the student materials, the Bible verses, and hearing the discussions of “transformation” and “spiritual formation,” write a definition of these terms in your own words.
- Storytelling: Find an audience of at least three persons (of any age) and read or tell them stories of “The King and His Two Sons” and “Rapunzel.” Prepare a list of at least three questions that give them a chance to tell you what the story is about. Write up their response in a one- to three-page report.
- Interview: Interview two or three persons over the age of 21. Explain to them the concept of “transformation” as treated in today’s class period. Then ask them to share examples of both gradual and instantaneous transformation that they have observed or experienced. Write an account that captures the most important aspects of the interviews.

### Write in Your Spiritual Life Journal using the prompts for today.

Your journaling assignment starts today. Here are some thought starters that you can use.

- One idea, Bible verse, or story that made an impression on me in class today was . . .
- A new idea I encountered today is . . .
- The most admirable thing I learned from or about a classmate is . . .
- One thing that made me uncomfortable today was . . .
- The effort that I am willing to put into this course and into my own spiritual formation during this term is best described by the word . . .
- The prayer I most want to pray right now is . . .

(continued on the next page)

**Reading Assignment:**

Examine the lesson for next session, "Who Needs Transformation?" In addition, read any of these sources you can find.

Dunning, H. Ray, *Grace, Faith and Holiness*. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1988), chapter 9, "Humanity as Sinful."

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Tracy, Wesley, et al., *Reflecting God* student textbook. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2000) chapters 1 and 4, "Somehow I Expected More," and "What Went Wrong, Anyway."

Weigelt, Morris, et al., *The Upward Call*. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1994), chapter 2, "Sabotaged By Sin."

## The King and His Two Sons

Once there was a king who wanted his two sons to grow up to be courteous, well-mannered gentlemen. But in their youth their behavior made him wonder if they would ever reach such a goal.

He challenged the boys with this proposition: Suppose a man wanted his son to become a gentleman. Could he make a gentleman of him by proper training and education?

The first son answered, "Of course, train him right and the father could make whatever he wants out of the boy."

The second son declared, "No, you are wrong. No amount of mere training would produce a gentleman."

The king, seeing that they disagreed, gave the boys a month to think and study. Then they would be summoned to appear before the king, and each would try to prove his case. The one who proved his case would be given his father's throne when the king passed to the other world.

The first son decided to think it over by meditating in a tavern. He ordered a drink (probably Coca-Cola). To his surprise he saw that his drink was served to him by a cat, a cat dressed in a waiter's uniform, walking on its back legs. Aha! If you can train a cat to be a waiter—well, the first son knew he had the winning argument. He purchased the trained cat from the tavern owner. It cost him plenty, but he could afford it because soon he would be the king.

The second son saw what had happened. He too thought that his brother had won the argument and would soon wear the king's crown. How the second son wanted to be king. But how could he compete with a cat trained as a waiter—and a good one at that. Then one day as he walked sadly down the street thinking of the lost throne, he saw something that made him smile.

The day came for the hearing before the king. The first son presented his trained cat. The cat was dressed in royal attire, walked on its back legs, and daintily served the king a plate of three chocolates.

Next the elegant, trained cat was to serve the king hot tea. But just as he approached the king with the steaming potion the second son opened the bag he was carrying and emptied it on the floor. Five frightened mice went running for cover. The elegant, trained cat dropped the tea, scalding the king. On all fours, the cat pounced on the nearest mouse, snarling and growling and gobbling its favorite food!

**Instructions:** In groups of four—knee-to-knee and eye-to-eye—discuss the story. Then in one sentence write the significance of this story for spiritual formation. Each group will write one answer. Each group's answer is to be shared with the whole class.

## Dimensions of Transformation

To transform means to change.

The NT word for changing outward appearance is *metasche* (2 Cor 11:13-14).

The NT word for changing nature, personality, or character is *metamorphoo* (Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 3:18).

Biblical nature and character transformation comes in at least two brands.

Instantaneous Transformation (2 Cor 5:17; Acts 15:9)

Transformation on the Journey (2 Cor 3:18)

## Spiritual Formation Is

“The whole person in relationship with God,  
within the community of believers,  
growing in Christlikeness,  
reflected in a Spirit-directed,  
disciplined lifestyle,  
and demonstrated in redemptive action in our world.”

Wesley Tracy, Morris Weigelt, Dee Freeborn, Janine Tartaglia, *The Upward Call: Spiritual Formation and the Holy Life* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 12.

## Rapunzel: A Story of Transformation

Remember the fairy tale about Rapunzel? She was held captive in a dark tower by a wicked witch. The evil witch removes all the mirrors so that Rapunzel can never see what she looks like. She keeps telling Rapunzel that she is world-class ugly. Really hard to look at. The witch told her, "Rapunzel, you look just like me."

Poor Rapunzel believes it. With no mirrors she cannot see her real beauty. Thus, she remains a prisoner of her supposed ugliness. The witch knows that believing she is ugly she will never try to escape.

Then along comes Prince Charming on his white horse. At that moment Rapunzel is leaning out of the tower to get some fresh air. The prince sees her. Their eyes meet and it is love at first sight.

Rapunzel lets down her beautiful long hair, and the prince climbs up it to the tower to rescue her. They gaze at each other lovingly. In the shining eyes of Prince Charming, Rapunzel sees the reflection of her own face. In the mirror—in the mirror of his eyes—she sees for the first time that she is beautiful.

As you weep over the ugliness of your sin, remember that you are more than a sinner. You are created in God's image. Mirrored in the eyes of the Savior you will first come to see your true beauty, the beautiful Christian that you can become.

*Have you experienced an instant transformation like that?*

## Lesson 2: Who Needs Transformation?

### Due this Lesson

Choose one:

- Bible study
- Key concepts
- Storytelling
- Interview

Journaling

### Learner Objectives

To help students

- understand the human predicament of being unholy and unhappy, lost yet longing for the Light, and be able to describe some of the signs of the longing and searching heart as expressed in some contemporary modern and postmodern religious and secular ideologies
- own their own sense of alienation and longing in the past and present
- be able to write an incisive “two-minute paper” on the human need for transformation
- apply their learning to a ministry setting by identifying fruitful preaching resources from the learning activities of this lesson

### Homework Assignments

#### Journaling

- Journal Prompt One: In your spiritual life journal respond to this: If I were going to use two of the anecdotes, quotations, or ideas from today’s lesson in a sermon I would select . . .
- Journal Prompt Two: Record your reflections about new things you learned today about two or three of your classmates. Write a one-sentence prayer for each of them.

#### Bible Study

Read the first 11 chapters of Genesis. Memorize 2 Cor 3:18.

#### Reading:

If the book *Reflecting God* is available to you, read chapters 2 and 3. Also, check out pages 15-22 of the *Reflecting God Workbook*.

## Getting to Know You Better

**Please share with your group your answer to two of the following:**

1. Where was your favorite childhood hiding place?
2. What was the first job you had that paid money?
3. When was the last time you cried?
4. Who was your hero when you were 12 years old?
5. When (if ever) did God become more than a word to you?
6. What pastor, teacher, or parent made a positive difference in your life?
7. Who or what was the center of human warmth in your childhood home?
8. If your life was made into a movie, what would the title be?
9. When did you fall in love for the very first time?
10. What Bible verse did you stand on in a very difficult time?
11. Where would you rather be than here today?
12. What was the happiest moment of your childhood?
13. What book (besides the Bible) has changed your life?
14. What was your most embarrassing moment?
15. If you could trade places with anyone in the world, who would you most want to be?
16. If you had the next six months off "with pay" so you could write a book, what would your topic be?

## The Human Predicament

1. "We are aliens from our home. . . . Modern man is no longer merely an exile. He has forgotten his home and has no hope of a promised land."  
British theologian, Michael Green, *New Life, New Lifestyle*
2. "Nothing faithful, vulnerable, fragile can be durable. . . . Death awaits these things like a cement floor awaits a dropping light bulb."  
Novelist, Saul Bellow, *Herzog*
3. "Jesus wouldn't want me for a sunbeam."  
Rock-star, Curt Cobain, shortly before he killed himself
4. "How shall the heart be reconciled to its feast of losses?"  
Stanley Kunitz, poet, "The Layers"
5. "I live in the desert like a pelican, in a ruin like a screech owl, I stay awake, lamenting like a lone bird on a roof."  
Psalm 102:6-7, JB
6. "Humanity without God is a seed upon the wind. . . . In the grip of [the wind] . . . what is a seed—no more than a particle of dust, a nameless nothing."  
Howard Thurman, clergyman
7. "I'm for anything that will get you through the night, be it prayer, pills, or a bottle of Jack Daniels."  
Frank Sinatra, dead singer
8. "Life's a long headache in a noisy street."  
Allen Ginsburg, poet, From *Howl*

## The Sound of Crashing Idols

In the modern period (Renaissance until the late 20th century) the people chased a cluster of “messiahs.” Though some had intrinsic value, they all turned out to be poor saviors. We have big words for these false saviors who still seduce many. Consider the fallen idols of modernity. Review today’s lecture, then look in today’s newspaper or recall the telecast news and search your own experience and observations for examples of each.

- 1. Materialism:** The greed for things, money, possessions. Those who grabbed a pile of money now know that riches do not heal the soul.  
Newspaper/media/experience examples:
- 2. Narcissism:** Self-centeredness. Selfish living never made anyone happy for more than a week.  
Newspaper/media/experience examples:
- 3. Hedonism:** Living for physical pleasure. Constant pleasure (gluttony, sex, drugs) ends in boredom and has awful consequences.  
Newspaper/media/experience examples:
- 4. Scientism:** Making science the be-all and end-all of life. As good as science and technology have been, they do not satisfy the hunger for God.  
Newspaper/media/experience examples:
- 5. Reason:** The belief that reality is logical. If it makes sense, do it. This fails to comprehend the spiritual that is sometimes above rationality.  
Newspaper/media/experience examples:
- 6. New Age Searching:** Eastern religions, New Age seminars, pre-Christian paganism, angel mania, Id-level Christianity, UFO and conspiracy cults, etc.  
Newspaper/media/experience examples:

## A Prayer for Transformation

Augustine, the blatant sinner turned saint, left this prayer in his *Confessions*. Make it your own today.

“Too late I loved you, O Beauty of ancient days, yet ever  
new!

Too late I loved you . . .

You called and shouted and burst my deafness.

You flashed, shone and scattered my blindness.

I . . . pant for you. I taste and hunger and thirst.

You touched me, and I burned for your peace . . .

Lord, have pity on me . . . I hide not my wounds;

You are the Physician, I the sick . . .

All my hope is . . . in your exceeding great mercy.”

## Lesson 3: Three Key Questions

### Due this Lesson

Bible Study  
Reading  
Journaling

### Learner Objectives

To help students

- explore biblical and theological answers to the questions of human identity, purpose, and longing as they relate to spiritual formation foundations
- experience and embrace light on one's own personal search for meaning, identity, and purpose
- act on insights regarding the ways that human purpose, identity, and meaning affect personal spiritual growth, and to apply such insights to the student's own ministry

### Homework Assignments

#### Bible Study

After careful personal study of Genesis 3 and Psalm 51, get together with someone for at least 30 minutes to talk about the meaning of these Bible passages. Your study partner may be a member of the class or someone else.

#### The Sin Collection

From your perusal of news media, reading, or personal experience and observation, collect at least six examples of how sin darkens lives today. Be prepared to share at the beginning of next session.

#### A One-Page Philosophy of Life:

300 words, due at the beginning of the next class that answer the three questions:

- Who am I?
- Why am I here?
- What am I searching for?

#### Journal Prompt:

Write about the Rebecca Thompson case. See Resource 3-5.

## Bible Study Guide

**In search of the answers to today's three questions, we turn to the Bible.**

**Step 1:** Working individually, study Genesis chapters 1 and 2 noting any statements, indications, or hints having to do with these questions: *Who am I? Why am I here? What am I searching for?*

**Step 2:** Join your Base Group members to share and consolidate your discoveries.

**Step 3:** Working as a group, examine these Scriptures for answers to the three questions of the day:

Hebrews 2: 6-8

Isaiah 26: 8-9

Deuteronomy 28: 65

1 John 3: 1-2

**Step 4:** Share with the class your group's best brief answers to the questions based on your study of these Scriptures.

## Who Do You Think You Are?

### Some say . . .

1. **You are an animal.** Hamsters, horses, humans—all chained to the same drives and behavior patterns, according to the socio-biologist.
2. **You are a cipher, a zero.** "They were born, they suffered, they died." That's the meaningless story of the human race.
3. **You are a human computer.** Artificial intelligence with a biological "motherboard."
4. **You are an immortal soul?** You have a soul—but is that what you are? Been listening to Plato and Eastern religion gurus a lot lately?
5. **You are a godling.** On your way from *Homo sapien* to *Homo divinus*. A warm and cozy but sub-Christian notion.

### The Christian faith says . . .

1. **You are an embodied person created by God and in the very image of God (Gen. 1:27).** Echoes of God's image within include the ability to transcend self, to reason, make moral choices, and above all, to love.
2. **You are the object of God's love.** The Christian response to Descartes' dictum *cogito ergo sum*, I think, therefore I am, is *sum amatus ergo sum*, I am loved, therefore I am.
3. **You are a unity of body, soul, spirit, mind, and heart.** "Body and soul," even "body, soul and spirit," is inadequate to describe the complex unitary being that God created you to be.
4. **You are a person who is free and responsible.** Though environment influences you, but because of "prevenient grace," it does not have the last word.

**So . . .who do you think you are? Try to do better than Schopenhauer's feeble, "I wish I knew."**

## What Am I Searching For?

Read these three excerpts. Then discuss them and try to reduce what each one teaches into a one-sentence poster or bumper sticker.

### Excerpt 1:

Graduation, Stanford University—a student speaker addressed the celebrating crowd describing his class as not having any idea how “it relates to the past or the future, having little sense of the present, no life-sustaining beliefs, secular or religious” and consequently having “no goal and no path” (from Rollo May, *The Cry for Myth* [NY: Norton, 1991], 21).

Bumper sticker or poster ideas:

Bumper sticker or poster ideas:

### Excerpt 3:

Douglas Coupland is on to something. This man who coined the term Generation X wrote in *Life After God* ([New York: Pocket Books, 1994], 350). “My secret is that I need God—that I am sick and can no longer make it alone. I need God to help me give, because I can no longer . . . be . . . giving; to help me be kind, as I no longer seem capable of kindness; to help me love, as I seem beyond being able to love.”

Bumper sticker or poster ideas:

### Excerpt 2:

Everywhere you see people lost, lonely, hungry, and searching for something. Confusing as this life is, they often do something as dumb as the three car thieves in Larkspur, CA, who tried to steal a pickup truck. The owner saw them and chased them yelling. He hailed a policeman and he too gave chase. The thieves made a valiant effort to escape. They scrambled over a tall fence with barbed wire ripping their pants and scratching the blood out of their shins. But it was worth it. The rotund truck owner and the middle-aged cop could never scale a fence like that. They didn't have to. The cop looked through the wires and said, “Congratulations, men. You just broke into San Quentin!” (*Homiletics*, Nov./Dec. 1995, 63).

## **Why Am I Here?**

The Bible says that the Lord put us in authority over the earth.

Another part of our purpose is to develop a godly community of faith.

We are here to reflect the image of God.

You are God's poem.

## Rebecca's Story

If Rebecca Thompson had only known that she was so much more than her shame. But she didn't know.

There are Fremont Canyon Bridges all over the landscape. And "Rebeccas" in every town, every street. Women and men acquainted with humiliation, violation, shame. They think they know who they are. Each thinks his or her name is spelled Worthless, Stained, Hopeless, Humiliated, Violated, Shamed.

**In your journal** complete the following sentence stems as you think about Rebecca's story.

1. This story made me feel . . . .
2. If some Christian or some church had reached out to Rebecca, maybe . . . .
3. If I had had a chance to speak with Rebecca before that fatal plunge, I would have told her . . . .
4. One thing I would like to do for Rebecca's daughter (now 12 years old) is . . . .
5. Shame is more powerful than . . . .
6. The only way to survive a brutal attack is to . . . .
7. One person I know who might be so shamed and depressed that he or she is looking for the "Fremont Canyon Bridge" is . . . .
8. One thing I can do for him or her is . . . .

## Lesson 4: Devastated By Sin

### Due this Lesson

Bible Study  
The Sin Collection  
One-Page Philosophy of Life  
Journaling

### Learner Objectives

To help students

- understand the biblical and Christian doctrine of sin, especially its significance for spiritual formation and holy living
- embrace the Christian doctrine of sin, especially the insight that no spiritual development can occur by mere human effort. In their heart of hearts students will feel that without the converting grace of God the spiritual disciplines are empty habits
- acknowledge the devastation of sin in their past, confess and forsake any known sin of the present, and praise God for His deliverance thus far

### Homework Assignments

#### Bible Study: What Is God Like?

Study the following passages and list all you learn about the nature and person of God. Be prepared to hand in your list. This assignment prepares students for Lesson 5: "What Is God Like?"

1 Peter 1:16  
2 Corinthians 1:3-5  
1 John 4:16, 19  
2 Corinthians 13:14  
Colossians 1:16  
Genesis 17:1  
Revelation 22:17  
John 3:16

#### Complete Resource 4-3

Complete Resource 4-3, "The Problem of Sin." This assignment extends today's lesson into the days ahead.

### Journal Prompts

Three key words to make part of your journal experience:

- *Acknowledge* that sin has had devastating effects in your own life, family and world.
- *Confess* any known sins in your present life—and, by God's grace, forsake them at once.
- *Praise* God for past and present forgiveness for sin and for cleansing your heart.

## The Origin and Reality of Sin

Your learning leader is delivering a lecture on the origin and reality of sin. Listen for KEY CONCEPTS. A “key” word or phrase opens the door to further thoughts. Take notes on the key phrases below and note the “doors of thought” they open for you.

| <b>Key Concepts</b>   | <b>Doors of Thought Opened</b> |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Disbelief or “unfaith”   | 1.                             |
| 2. Pride as egocentricity and self-idolatry                                 | 2.                             |
| 3. Disobedience   | 3.                             |
| 4. “Darkness that may be felt”  | 4.                             |
| 5. “Every one of them have lounged at your table and laughed at your jokes” | 5.                             |
| 6. “No preeminence over the goat”   | 6.                             |
| 7. “He sees the snare and abhors it and runs into it.”                      | 7.                             |
| 8. An ancient Yoruba proverbial greeting                                    | 8.                             |
| 9. “The most empirically verifiable of all Christian doctrines”             | 9.                             |

## Words for Sin in the Scriptures

Examine the following Hebrew and Greek Bible words for *sin* and their meanings. Read the reference given. Try reading the definition in place of the word. For example, in Psalm 51:3: I acknowledge my *peshah* and my *chataah* is ever before me. In the previous verse he calls on God to wash him clean from *avon*.

In reading the definition for the word we find David praying for cleansing from iniquity (*avon*), acknowledging his rebellion (*peshah*), and saying that his missing the mark (*chataah*) is always on his mind. One could say that David knew all the dimensions of sin!

### 1. Hebrew (Old Testament) Words for Sin

| Term                   | Meaning  | References                                |
|------------------------|--|---|
| <i>Chata, chataath</i> | Missing the mark or path, failure, falling short | Gen 4:7; Ex 10:16-17                      |
| <i>Pesha</i>           | Rebel, revolt transgress, disobey, perversity    | Ps 5:10; Prov 28:13; Isa 44:22; Amos 5:12 |
| <i>Avon</i>            | Twisted, bent, crooked, distorted, perverse      | Ps 106:43; Jer 31:30, 34; Isa 13:11       |
| <i>Shagah</i>          | To err, go astray, mistake                       | Lev 4:13; Isa 28:7; Ezek 34:6, Prov 19:27 |

### 2. Greek (New Testament) Words for Sin

| Term             | Meaning   | References                             |
|------------------|---|--|
| <i>Hamartia</i>  | To miss the mark                                      | Mt 1:21; Lk 5:21; Rom 3:23; 1 Pet 3:18 |
| <i>Adikia</i>    | Unrighteousness, injustice, injury                    | Rom 2:8; 1 Jn 5:17; 2 Pet 2:13         |
| <i>Parabasis</i> | Transgress, trespass                                  | Rom 2:23; Heb 9:15                     |
| <i>Paraptoma</i> | Transgress, trespass, offense                         | Rom 5:15-20; Eph 2:5; Col 2:13         |
| <i>Anomia</i>    | Lawlessness, indifference to God's law or ignoring it | 1 Cor 9:21; Heb 1:9; Mk 15:28          |

# The Problem of Sin

(All assignments are take-home and due at the beginning of the next session.)

## 1. The Doctrine of Sin

Here are representative views on human nature. Which one describes humanity as you know it? Which best represents the Christian faith?

1. Human beings are born totally depraved, incapable of one good deed or one good thought.
2. Human beings are born good.
3. Human beings are born neutral, like a blank sheet of paper. Society or environment makes them good or evil or both. No one should be praised or blamed.
4. There is no such thing as sin or good or evil. What we perceive as evil or good are illusions.
5. We are born with a powerful inclination to evil. But this is somewhat countered by the image of God within and by "prevenient grace" whereby we are given the ability to choose God and good if we will.

### 1. What the Bible says about the human heart.

1. Job 15: 14, 16: "What is man, that he could be pure . . . [he] is vile and corrupt, [he] drinks up evil like water."
  2. Psalm 51: 5: "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."
  3. Jeremiah 17: 9: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (KJV).
  4. John 3: 19: "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."
- My verdict on the human heart is

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## 2. What does human sinfulness mean to me?

Which of the following do you believe are accurate statements?

1. Adam and Eve not only preceded us, but also represented us, the whole race.
2. Our first parents bequeathed to their descendants just what they had to pass on: a broken relationship with God, fragmented natures, and a propensity to sin.
3. We do not understand how sinfulness is passed on, we just know that sin imprisons each and every generation.
4. Like Adam and Eve, we are "able to stand, but free to fall" and we face the same temptations they did.
5. Though Adam and Eve passed on a terrible legacy, we must admit that their story is our story. Just like them, each one of us chose disbelief, disobedience, and selfish pride.

**3. Bible study: I'm a sinner—so what?**

Look up these scriptures and respond to the questions that follow.

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) Psalm 34:21       | (5) 1 Thessalonians 1:8-9 |
| (2) Matthew 25:41, 46 | (6) Matthew 10:28         |
| (3) 1 Timothy 5:24    | (7) Psalm 95:10-11        |
| (4) Romans 6:23       |                           |

- (a) Which one(s) of these passages say that sin will destroy the sinner?
- (b) Which one(s) show that sin's payday is death?
- (c) Which one(s) describe hell as everlasting destruction and separation from the presence of the Lord?
- (d) Which passage describes hell as eternal fire reserved for the devil, his angels, and sinners?
- (e) Which passage(s) shows that God takes sin very seriously?

**4. From the grim to the gracious**

Though sin and death entered this world through the failure of the first Adam, a Second Adam "to the rescue came." Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, was sinless. Thus He reversed the evil that the first Adam brought on us. In the long run, considering this life and the next, Jesus Christ restores all that was lost in the Fall, even more. Study these passages in your quiet time today. Note the key concept on this worksheet.

John 1:10-13 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 53:4-6 \_\_\_\_\_

1 John 1:9 \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Facing the reality of sin is important to spiritual formation and holy living because:**

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# Lesson 5: What Is God Like?

## Due this Lesson

Bible study  
Resource 4-3  
Journaling

## Learner Objectives

To help students

- be able to cite and discuss some of the key elements in the nature of God revealed in the Bible and described in the Articles of Faith of the church of the Nazarene
- have the opportunity to open their hearts to the holy, loving, seeking God of the Bible
- be able to present a more authentic vision of the Christian God in their ministry situations

## Homework Assignments

### Written Assignment:

Prepare a sermon outline suitable for Holy Trinity Sunday.

Sermon Outline: Today you worked on a worship service plan for Holy Trinity Sunday. Before next session create a sermon for that service.

Step 1: Select one of these passages for the text:

Matthew 28: 16-20

2 Corinthians 13: 4-14

Galatians 4: 1-7

Step 2: Study the passage thoroughly and prayerfully.

Step 3: State the "theme" of the sermon.

Step 4: Write out the "objectives" for the sermon.

Step 5: Write out the introduction for the sermon.

Step 6: Create an outline for the body of the sermon.

Step 7: Write the conclusion for the sermon.

Hand in your paper with all seven steps at our next session.

### Journal Prompt

Record in your journal any corrections, adjustments, or expansions that this lesson brought to your concept of God.

## Contemporary Statements About God

Here are some contemporary statements about God cited by Stanley J. Grenz in *What Christians Really Believe and Why* (73-76). Which of these, if any, echoes your own beliefs?

1. "God is actually *in* the flowers and the growing grass and all the little chirping, singing things" (Agnes Sanford, charismatic Episcopal missionary).
2. In a short story (*Teddy*) a spiritually sensitive boy gets an insight while watching his sister pour a glass of milk. "All of a sudden I saw that she was God and the milk was God. I mean, all she was doing was pouring God into God" (J. D. Salinger, American Jewish author).
3. In *The Color Purple* Shug Avery says, "God is inside you and inside everybody else. You come into the world with God. But only them that search for it inside find it. . . . I believe that God is in everything" (Alice Walker, African American novelist).
4. "No matter how much we may like to pussyfoot around it . . . God wants us to become Himself (or Herself or Itself)" (M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*).
5. "Be still and know that you are God," teaches Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, rewriting Psalm 46:10, which says, "Be still and know that I am God."
6. "There need be no guilt or recrimination, where at last the self is indistinguishable from God" (Alan Watts, Episcopal priest turned Zen master).

## Who Says So?

The quality of the “witnesses” is important to any speech, sermon, or lecture. That is to ask, “Who did the speaker recruit and quote to make his point?” The stronger and more appropriate the “witnesses” or sources are, the more effective the speech. As you listen to the learning leader give the lecture, note the “witnesses” with care.

- Step 1: Divide the labor among the members of your Base Group. One person will be assigned to Cluster 1, another to Cluster 2, another to Cluster 3, and another to Cluster 4. Note the source or witness and jot down the gist of what point the source was recruited to make.
- Step 2: At the end of the lecture, all the Cluster 1 people will meet, all the Cluster 2 listeners will meet, as will the Cluster 3 and Cluster 4 auditors. As you meet with the other members of your cluster, compare notes and clarify what was heard.
- Step 3: Return now to your Base Group where brief reports from each Cluster meeting will be heard.
- Step 4: The leader-convener of each Base Group will decide on the one most important witness, source, or quote reported. The spokesperson of each Base Group will then give a one-minute report.

### Cluster 1

Rudolf Otto  
St. Augustine  
1 John 4: 16  
Celtic Christians  
Genesis 17: 1

### Cluster 3

H. Ray Dunning  
Bette Midler  
Stanley Grenz  
Charles Wesley  
Colossians 1: 16

### Cluster 2

*Pursuit Magazine*  
Roderick Leupp  
John Greenleaf Whittier  
J. Kenneth Grider  
Psalm 11: 7

### Cluster 4

2 Corinthians 13: 14  
2 Chronicles 7: 3  
George Lucas  
Swami Vivekananda  
Athanasian Creed

# The Holy God

Holy, holy, holy—what does it mean that God is holy? Does it mean that He is more honest, more moral, more just than human beings? He is all those, of course, but the term “holy” means so much more.

## A. Dimensions of God’s Holiness

Rudolf Otto and John G. Gammie described the overwhelming holiness of God using these Latin terms

1. *Tremendum*—“awefulness,” plenitude of power that evokes dread and fear
2. *Majestas*—absolute unapproachableness, “overpoweringness,” plenitude of being
3. *Energicum*—energy that the mystic experiences as “consuming fire,” urgency, vitality, force, energy
4. *Mysterium*—being the “Wholly Other,” in a category separate to himself, transcendent, supernatural
5. *Fascinans*—compelling, fascinating, spiritually intoxicating, rapture, exaltation\*

## B. Study Exodus 19

A careful reading of this chapter reveals all five dimensions of God’s holiness.

## C. Three fold Meaning of “Holy” in the Old Testament

1. **First and foremost, it means *separation*.** God is separate and distinct from all of creation. God alone is holy. Any human holiness is merely a gift derived from God. Nothing about us is inherently or naturally holy.
2. **Second, the holiness of God is sometimes synonymous with the burning splendor of the presence of the Lord.**
3. **Third, God’s holiness refers to His purity.** God’s holiness is the opposite of “uncleanness” and carries connotations of justice, ceremonial purity, integrity, and upright morality.

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\*See Greathouse, *Wholeness in Christ*, 13.

## The Trinity

The Celtic Christians of old spoke of the Trinity in such natural and devotional terms that faith is not strained:

*Three folds in the cloth, yet only one napkin is there,  
Three joints in the finger, but still only one finger fair,  
Three leaves of the shamrock, yet no more than one  
shamrock to wear,  
Frost, snowflakes, and ice, all in water their origin share,  
Three Persons in God; to one God alone we make prayer.*

Esther De Waal, *The Celtic Way of Prayer*  
(New York: Doubleday, 1997), 39-40.

# The Trinity in the Nazarene Articles of Faith

Your task is to explain the first three Nazarene Articles of Faith to a class of 12-year-olds. Study the following Articles of Faith, discussing the italicized *descriptors* and *verb phrases*. Discuss the key terms in your Base Groups. Your learning leader may ask each Base Group to work on just one of the Articles of Faith. Formulate a report to the whole class starting with the questions below. Refer to regular and theological dictionaries (such as *Beacon Dictionary of Theology*).

## 1. The Triune God

We believe in one *eternally existent, infinite God, Sovereign* of the Universe; that He only is God, *creative* and *administrative, holy* in nature, attributes, and purpose; that He, as God, is *Triune in essential being*, revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## 2. Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Triune Godhead; that He was *eternally one* with the Father; that He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and *was born of the Virgin Mary*, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and manhood, are thus *united in one Person* very God and very man, the God-man.

We believe that Jesus Christ *died for our sins*, and that He truly *arose from the dead* and took again His body, together with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith He *ascended* into heaven and is there engaged in *intercession* for us.

## 3. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Triune Godhead, that He is *ever present* and *efficiently active* in and with the Church of Christ, *convincing* the world of sin, *regenerating* those who repent and believe, *sanctifying* believers, and *guiding* into all truth as it is in Jesus.

## Guidance for Shaping Your Report to the Class

1. Which concepts will be most easily grasped by your 12-year-olds?
2. Which terms or ideas are the hardest to explain?
3. Which ideas do preteens most need to know?
4. Earlier we saw that Holiness, Love, and Trinity were the very essence of God's being as taught by the Scriptures and the Christian faith. Which of these is most emphasized in the three Articles of Faith? Which is stressed least? How does this affect your teaching of the 12-year-old class?

# Planning a Holy Trinity Sunday Service

## 1. Special Resources

- (1) The Bible, (2) Hymnals (the Nazarene Hymnal, *Sing to the Lord*, has a whole section of trinitarian hymns), (3) the lectionary texts.

### *Lectionary Texts*

| <i>Old Testament</i> | <i>Psalm/Wisdom</i> | <i>Epistle</i> | <i>Gospel</i> |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Gen 1:1—2: 3         | Ps 8                | 2 Cor 13:5-14  | Jn 3:16-17    |
| Deut 4:32-40         | Ps 29               | Rom 8:12-17    | Mt 28:16-20   |
| Isa 6:1-8            | Ps 33:1-12          | Rom 5:1-5      | Jn 16:12-15   |
| Ex 34:4-9            | Prov 8:22-31        | Gal 4:1-7      |               |

## 2. Elements of the Service

1. Call to Worship (trinitarian scripture) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Prayer of Invocation (brief, trinitarian) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Old Testament Reading from the Lectionary selections or another of your choice (give the reference only)  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. First Trinitarian Hymn or Song \_\_\_\_\_
5. New Testament Reading (Epistle) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Second Trinitarian Hymn, Song, or Chorus \_\_\_\_\_
7. The Creed (Apostles' or Nicene) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Pastoral Prayer: Cite key words of praise, thanksgiving, intercession and petition that harmonize with the theme of Trinity Sunday and the needs of the people.
9. The Offering (with trinitarian music) \_\_\_\_\_
10. The Sermon: Give the text and title of a sermon that could live and breathe in the worship atmosphere that the service plan seeks to create.  
  
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Text(s) \_\_\_\_\_
11. Response to the sermon and to the Lord:  
  
Psalm or Wisdom Literature Reading \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Closing Hymn or Song \_\_\_\_\_
12. Charge or Commission to Go and Serve \_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. Benediction (biblical, trinitarian) \_\_\_\_\_

## From the Heart of God

Hear the call to you from the heart of God. The names Ephraim (a wayward tribe), Israel and Moab (wayward nations) have been deleted from these verses so that you can write in your own name.

God said,

"My soul moans like a lyre for \_\_\_\_\_"  
(Isa 16: 11, RSV).

"How can I give you up, \_\_\_\_\_?"  
(Hos 11:8).

"How can I hand you over, \_\_\_\_\_?"  
(Hos 11:8).

## Lesson 6: What's So Special About Jesus

### Due this Lesson

Holy Trinity Sunday Service outline or sermon outline  
Journaling

### Learner Objectives

To help students

- gain a better intellectual grasp of contemporary, traditional, and biblical ideas about the person and work of Jesus Christ
- develop an “understanding of the heart” that welcomes Jesus as the Savior and Lord who identifies with us
- demonstrate in discussion, writing, and ministry a knowledge of and appreciation for the Christ of the Bible

### Homework Assignments

#### Soul-winning Plans

Personal evangelism plans are usually gospel summaries. Locate all the soul-winning plans you can (such as the Four Spiritual Laws, the Roman Way to Salvation, etc.) and bring them to class.

#### Journal Prompt

In response to today's session write in your journal

- Note an idea or concept that had an impact on you—positive or negative
- Record an emotion you experienced while processing the content of today's lesson
- Write about something you decided or actually did in your personal life, spiritual life, ministry, or family life in response to this session.

## What the Bible Says About Jesus

On the left side of this page is a list of biblical teachings about Jesus Christ. On the right, in random order, are Scripture references where these teachings may be found. Every item on the left has at least one—some have more—reference that teaches the truth it claims. Place the proper “letter” or “letters” to the left of each topic. Follow the instructions of your learning leader regarding assigned topics and how to report.

| FIND A SCRIPTURE IN THE LIST ON THE RIGHT THAT TEACHES THAT: |   |                          |
|--|---|--------------------------|
|  | 1. Jesus was preexistent with and is God.                               | A. Luke 24: 25-27        |
|  | 2. Jesus is the Son of God.   | B. John 1: 1             |
|  | 3. Jesus had power to heal with a “word.”                               | C. Hebrews 4: 15         |
|  | 4. Jesus is the Chief or Good Shepherd.                                 | D. John 3: 16-17         |
|  | 5. Jesus was truly human.   | E. Matthew 16: 16        |
|  | 6. Jesus died for our sins.   | F. Matthew 3: 16-17      |
|  | 7. Jesus was God’s agent of reconciliation.                             | G. 1 Peter 3: 18         |
|  | 8. Jesus is our High Priest.  | H. Romans 8: 34          |
|  | 9. Jesus came to save, not condemn.                                     | I. 1 John 2: 1           |
|  | 10. Jesus intercedes for us as our Advocate in heaven.                  | J. Isaiah 53: 3-6        |
|  | 11. The new birth comes because of Christ’s resurrection.               | K. Ephesians 1: 5        |
|  | 12. To crucify the Son of God “afresh” is very dangerous.               | L. Romans 8: 14-17       |
|  | 13. We are saved by the precious blood of Christ.                       | M. Luke 7: 7-10          |
|  | 14. Jesus is the Lamb of God.   | N. Ephesians 2: 7-10     |
|  | 15. Jesus is the Son of Man.  | O. 2 Corinthians 5: 17   |
|  | 16. Jesus has the power to forgive sins.                                | P. John 1: 29            |
|  | 17. Jesus is the author of our eternal life.                            | Q. Revelation 5: 16      |
|  | 18. Through Christ we have forgiveness of sins.                         | R. Acts 4: 12            |
|  | 19. Through Christ we have justification and peace with God.            | S. Matthew 12: 8; 25: 31 |
|  | 20. Jesus gives us a “new start with a new heart” through regeneration. | T. 1 Peter 1: 18-19      |
|  | 21. Believers in Jesus are adopted into God’s family.                   | U. Ephesians 1: 7        |
|  | 22. Jesus gave His life as a ransom for many.                           | V. 1 Peter 1: 3          |
|  | 23. Jesus was crushed for our iniquity, pierced for our transgressions. | W. 1 Cor 15: 53-57       |
|  | 24. Salvation is found in Christ and no one else.                       | X. John 17: 1-2          |
|  | 25. Jesus Christ is the expression of grace that saves us.              | Y. Ephesians 2: 19-22    |
|  | 26. Jesus Christ is the Foundation, the Cornerstone of the Church.      | Z. Mark 2: 10            |
|  |   | AA. 1 Peter 2: 25; 5: 4  |
|  |   | BB. John 10: 11          |
|  |   | CC. 2 Cor 5: 19-21       |
|  |   | DD. Colossians 1: 22     |
|  |   | EE. John 1: 14           |
|  |   | FF. 1 John 1: 1-4        |
|  |   | GG. Hebrews 6: 6         |
|  |   | HH. Colossians 1: 4      |
|  |   | JJ. Ephesians 1: 7-8     |
|  |   | KK. Romans 5: 1-2        |
|  |   | LL. Mark 10: 45          |
|  |   | MM. 1 Timothy 2: 6       |
|  |   | NN. Revelation 1: 13     |

## Jesus Identifies with Us

*"We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin."*

Hebrews 4:15

1. The Incarnation
2. The Temptation of Jesus
3. The Sacrificial Death of Jesus
4. The Baptism of Jesus

### ***Question of the Day***

Why would Jesus, who knew no sin, step in line with a bunch of repentant sinners to be baptized?

# Cross Ways

A sermon by Dr. Wesley D. Tracy

Sermon Text: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us *new birth . . . through the resurrection of Jesus Christ* from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3 emphasis added).

What do you see when you look at the Cross? I mean really look at the Cross—not when you note the cross on the bell tower that lets you know that's the place you turn to get to the One Hour Photo shop, not the way you look at a cross-shaped locket to see how it sets off an indigo blouse. What do you visualize, feel, and think when you look at the Cross of Christ?

I fear that the doctrine of the Cross, the doctrine of at-one-ment (atonement) has become a matter of assumption, an almost glib "been there done that" level of consideration. But the *mysterium tremendum* of the atonement deserves more attention than that. Only in heaven will we fully comprehend all the dynamics of this miracle of love and grace.

Sometimes our preachers and songwriters, themselves, get a bit careless in slinging around "Cross talk." The ideas we preach, teach, and sing sometimes go down "crossways" to the person really seeking to know the God behind and the God on the Cross.

We certainly will not probe all the sacred depths of the mystery of the atonement in this sermon today. I cannot answer all the questions. But let me ask some questions that evangelicals need to look at given the offhand "Cross talk" that abounds today.

## 1. When you look at the Cross with the eyes of your heart, do you see primarily "punishment"?

I spoke on the phone the other day to a young woman, a graduate of a Nazarene college; she is active in the youth program and conducts a Bible study in her home. She was complaining about her pastor's sermon—not so unusual, I know. Seems that her pastor had preached on the awfulness of sin. And he failed, according to the young woman, to tell them that, and I now quote her, "Jesus had taken the punishment for our sins."

This young woman is very dear to me (my granddaughter), but I had to stop her and ask, "Where in the Bible does it say that Jesus was punished for our sins?" Of course, she couldn't come up with any reference. And you couldn't either, because, as Nazarene theologian H. Ray Dunning says, the notion that "Jesus bears punishment for man's sin is totally foreign to the New Testament" (*Grace, Faith, and Holiness*, 372). J. Kenneth Grider, another Nazarene theologian who disagrees with Dunning

every chance he gets, actually agrees with him on this point. The sacrificial death of Jesus was not an act of punishment—or if it was, the divinely inspired New Testament writers missed it. But evangelicals and Fundamentalists often use that imagery.

Looking over the second grade curriculum of a leading evangelical publisher I read this sentence—I mean, I held the paper in my hand and read it myself—"God killed Jesus for your sins." Who could blame the little kids for feeling sorry for Jesus and being mad at God the Father?

And that's the problem with that kind of language, it impugns the good name of God the Father. It paints a picture of a dad enraged and outraged at life in general and at his kids in particular. He grabs one of his sons and flogs him, thrashes him to the door of death. His rage finally appeased, he announces, "I forgive you." What? If the son could speak he would say (and I quote theologian J. Kenneth Grider, a longtime member of this church), the son would say, "No, you did not forgive me—you punished me" (*A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*, 329). Grider, my teacher at seminary, goes on to say, "If the Father's justice must be . . . satisfied by punishment, then no forgiveness is possible. It is either punishment or forgiveness, surely, not punishment and forgiveness" (329).

Clark H. Pinnock, Canadian evangelical theologian, reminds us, "God is not sadistically crucifying His beloved Son. . . . Jesus did not die to change God's attitude toward us but to change our attitude toward God. . . . The Cross was not a sacrifice without which God could not love or forgive us; it was a sacrifice without which we would not have been able to accept forgiveness" (*Unbounded Love*, [InterVarsity Press, 1994], 103).

Another problem with "punishment talk" is that we separate the Persons of the Trinity and pit them one against the other as in "God killed Jesus." The Trinity is a unity, a community of love that cannot be separated or divided. The Christian faith teaches that there is one divine essence, three distinct Persons, with the totality of the Essence dwelling in each Person. The God revealed in Jesus is one God revealed, as our Articles of Faith declare, as Father, Son, and Spirit. Baptist theologian Stanley J. Grenz says, "This God is one, for the three [Persons] share the same will, nature, and essence. Christians are not polytheists, for we do not worship three distinct Gods . . . we serve . . . the one God who is Father,

Son, and Spirit" (*What Christians Really Believe and Why*, [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998],71).

What does this mean? Many things, but one thing it means is that wherever we find one Person of the Trinity we find them all. As the Bible says, "God [the Father] was in Christ [on the Cross] reconciling the world to himself" (see 2 Cor 5:19).

If when you pray visualizing the Cross you see "punishment," perhaps you are missing something. Have you conjured up a fierce God who is not about to offer any "grace" or forgiveness until somebody bleeds? Who could call that forgiveness?

God the Father deserves better from us. Let us be careful how we use "punishment" language when we speak of the Father who is after all, according to St. Paul, "the Father of compassion . . . the God of all comfort" (2 Cor 1:3).

## 2. When you look at the Cross, do you see a debt paid off?

When you think of the Cross, do you think of a debt being paid? Think about this:

*Who paid what?  
To whom?  
And why?*

I hate to blame the lawyers like everyone else does. But a lawyer got Protestants to think of the atonement as a legal transaction in which Jesus paid the debt for our sins. John Calvin was a great, great man, but he was a lawyer first and a theologian second. His "Cross talk" was legalese from beginning to end. To Calvin, one of the greatest of the Protestant Reformers, God was a stern Judge who is mad at us and must be appeased. Jesus stepped up and paid the debt and that made God stop being mad and start loving and forgiving us. In his *Institutes* brother Calvin makes it seem that "God wanted Jesus to die and predestined Pilate and Caiaphas to make it happen. Surely not—Jesus is God's beloved Son. The Father and the Son are not divided or in opposition" (Pinnock, 102).

Nazarene theologian J. Kenneth Grider rejects the Cross as "debt-paying." He says, "Even as one cannot punish and also forgive, one cannot accept payment for a debt and still forgive" (331). Grider points out that Scripture indeed says, "You are not your own; you were bought at a price" (1 Cor 6:19-20). This no doubt means that we are bought with the price of Christ's suffering, not the price of a debt being paid. The Bible does speak of one dimension of the atonement as a "ransom," but even in those three cases no third party collecting "accounts payable" is noted. Grider goes on to say, "Neither a human being nor God, surely, can accept payment for a debt and still forgive the debt. And forgiveness, sheer forgiveness, is unique to Christianity, of all the religions, and must be protected" (331).

Put more simply: Suppose you owe me \$100. I demand full payment—with interest. You pay your tab in full. I then say, "I forgive you the debt." How false. How oxymoronic. If the debt is paid, how can I say it was forgiven?

If the Cross was a payment to God, He could not forgive us. How could He accept payment and then say He forgives? If God accepted payment for all the sins of all the sinners, how could anyone at any time be condemned or end up in hell because of their sins? Not only does this create a logical problem, it puts a black mark on the character of God the Father.

To say that God the Father ordered Jesus to pay the penalty for sin not only divides the indivisible Trinity but makes of the Father a fierce ogre who belligerently refuses to forgive a single sin until the bill is paid in full. Some have actually taught that mankind was held captive by Satan, and Jesus was the ransom price paid to the kidnapper. Then, like a cagey lawyer, God tricked the devil and got His Son back. That kind of theology does not inspire confidence.

God the Father did not sit down at some cosmic bargaining table and strike a deal with the devil giving up Jesus like a slave trader. Nor was there some transaction whereby Jesus contracted to buy off a stubborn God the Father. Knowing the unity of the Trinity, we understand that where one Person is, all are present. Thus, the Bible says, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor 5:19, KJV). That is to say, God absorbed within himself the suffering needed to produce "at-onement." He did it not because someone finally met His price; He did it because He is love, holy love.

When we say that God was in Christ reconciling us we mean that there was no third party in the wings writing out a "paid-in-full" receipt. God is at once the *offerer* and the *offering* for sin. "Every Person of the Holy Trinity acted in unison as God absorbed within himself the suffering required for our redemption" (Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God*, 46).

## 3. When you see the Cross, does it block your view of the Resurrection?

The way some of us preachers go on, you would think that salvation was achieved, completed, finished, wrapped up when Jesus went to the Cross. The Resurrection then appears as a sort of light dessert—maybe angel food cake—at the end of a five-course meal at which the main entrée was the Cross. Even on Easter we preachers can't resist looking at the crucifixion. Whoever preaches next Easter in this church will almost certainly remind us that there is "no Easter without Calvary."

Is the central human problem *guilt* or *death*? Those who think it is guilt often diminish the Resurrection in favor of the Cross. If the problem is essentially

guilt and the atonement is about punishment and debt paying, then the Cross is all they need. The Resurrection has little or no saving value.

But those of us who see the great human problem as essentially death know that the Resurrection also has great saving power. St. Paul knew that, "For if . . . we were reconciled . . . through the death of his Son, how much more . . . *shall we be saved through his life!*" (Rom 5:10, emphasis added).

St. Peter knew that: "In his great mercy he [God] has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:3). Peter also wrote concerning baptism saying that "it saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 3:22).

Make no mistake, both guilt and death are great human problems. But in the Cross and the Resurrection both problems are fully dealt with. Forgiveness of sin and eternal life—what more could we ask from a loving Redeemer?

Sometimes we need to be reminded that without the Resurrection we would probably have never heard of Jesus of Nazareth. No Resurrection; no Christianity! The bodily resurrection of Jesus stands as the cornerstone of the Church.

What about all those commandments, parables, and the miracles of Jesus? What about the crucifixion? Without the resurrection of Jesus you would never have heard of any of those—not one! His life and death would have been anonymously buried by the sand of time. Not a footprint would have been left by the Nazarene without the Resurrection.

Josephus, the ancient historian, wrote that during the first century AD the Romans crucified 1.1 million Jews. When the Roman legions tore down the Temple, Josephus says that the soldiers crucified Jews on every standing tree in Jerusalem. When they ran out of trees, they nailed them to walls. The blood of crucified Jews ran in rivers down the streets. Jesus would have been just one in a million—except for the Resurrection which validated His Incarnation, miracles, teachings, and His sacrificial death. Today Resurrection power fuels the experience of eternal life!

What Jesus did had never been done before in the whole history of the universe. C. S. Lewis says, "He has forced open a door that has been locked since the death of the first man. He has met, fought, and beaten the King of Death" (*The Joyful Christian*, 65).

Do not think that the resurrection of Jesus proves merely the immortality of the soul. The Resurrection is not about the survival of the human spirit. If that is all that happened, then Jesus simply did what all men do—the body dies, the soul escapes to a body-free, ghostly existence in some never-never land. If that were the case, then the only thing new about

Jesus' experience would be that we got to see it happen (see C. S. Lewis, 66)

But the Resurrection of Jesus included the resurrection of the body. We, too, then look forward to being "raised imperishable . . . For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. . . . Death has been swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor 15:52-54). We do not know nearly all we would like to about that resurrection body but we know that we shall be like the risen Christ (1 Jn 3:2).

For those first Christians teaching and preaching about Jesus was primarily proclaiming the Resurrection. Paul wrote, "I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins . . . [and] he was raised on the third day" (1 Cor 15:3-4). Truly Jesus in His incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection is our Light and our Hope.

As you think of the Cross and all its redemptive truth, please notice that it is silhouetted by the redemptive glow of Easter.

#### **4. When you look at the Cross, do you see primarily agony endured or love outpoured?**

When we gaze upon the Cross, the agony endured on our behalf breaks our heart. That agony was intense, real, and greater than any pain I have volunteered to bear. But the Cross is much more than agony endured. It is love poured out. William Barclay, in the *Daily Study Bible*, reminds us, "There is something tragically wrong in any emphasis on the agony of the Cross which dimmed the brightness of the Resurrection, [something wrong with] any suggestion that it was *endured pain* rather than *over-coming love* that secured man's salvation" (*James and Peter*, 185).

Is the Cross more than endured pain for you? The physical pain that His murderers inflicted upon Jesus was not greater than many others endured. Those who have been butchered and burned at the stake or tortured to death in other ways have endured as much or more physical pain than Jesus did.

We need to know that Jesus voluntarily suffered intensely for us. Preachers like me sometimes leave the impression, however, that the Cross was all about agony. I remember when Jim Bishop's book *The Day Christ Died* came out. He described in authentic detail the excruciating death on the Cross. I developed a sermon on the agony of the Cross that shamed several people to an altar of prayer.

Some Christians in the Catholic tradition have been so mesmerized by the suffering on the Cross that the epitome of spirituality for them was to so agonize with the pain of Jesus that the wounds of Christ would appear on their own bodies, blood would actually flow from their palms in sympathy with Jesus. While such devotion is not to be scoffed

at, perhaps they saw the Cross as agony endured rather than love outpoured.

Our Eastern Orthodox friends are quick to tell us western Christians that seeing the Cross as primarily pain is a flaw in our spirituality. Instead they see the Cross as triumphant love. Some of you have read Kahlil Gibran. Gibran was the son of a Christian priest. In his book *Jesus, the Son of Man*, he reports the experience of Simon of Cyrene, the man who was forced to carry the Cross when Jesus faltered and fell under its weight. Simon tells of the hammer and nails of the crucifixion. But looking at Christ hanging there he says, "My heart did not think to pity Him, for I was too filled with wonder" (Alfred A. Knopf, 1966, 202).

In one of Gibran's devotional essays, written on Good Friday, he stands before the Cross and says, "If Humanity were wise, she would stand today and sing in strength the song of conquest and the hymn of triumph . . ."

Thou art on the Cross, more glorious and dignified than one thousand kings upon one thousand thrones in one thousand empires . . .

Thou art in the agony of death, more powerful than a thousand generals in a thousand wars . . .

With Thy sorrows, Thou art more joyous than the Spring with its flowers . . .

Thy wreath of thorns is more brilliant and sublime than the crown of Bahram . . .

The nails piercing Thy hands are more beautiful than the scepter of Jupiter . . .

The splatters of blood upon Thy feet are more resplendent than the necklace of Ishtar.

Forgive the weak who lament Thee today . . .

Forgive them for they do not know that Thou hast conquered death with death, and bestowed life upon the dead . . .

Forgive them for they do not know that Thy strength awaits them. (*The Treasured Writings of Kahlil Gibran*, Castle, 1975, 233).

George Hunter (111) tells a story about the First Methodist Church in Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia had more than 100 laws limiting what the church could do. They couldn't witness, evangelize, or even put up a church sign. Then came the day when Communism collapsed. All 100 antichurch laws were repealed at once. The elders at First Methodist, Prague, met to consider what to put on their very first church sign. The meeting lasted late into the

night. They discussed, prayed, meditated, and voted. Next morning found this sign in front of the church: "The Lamb Wins" (*Herald of Holiness*, May, 1993, 4).

While not diminishing the agony of the Cross, you and I need to sometimes behold our crucified Savior and shout, "The Lamb wins!"

....This sermon was preached by Wesley Tracy, guest preacher, at the First Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, MO, September 9, 2001.

### Discussion Starters

Some pastors have "reflection committees" who meet them after every Sunday morning sermon. The committee members counsel and advise the pastor on various issues. Take the role of a reflection committee and discuss this sermon with the preacher. Use these thought starters if you wish:

1. The most helpful part of the sermon was . . .
2. The part of the sermon that needs more clarification is . . .
3. One thing I think I disagree with is . . .
4. One illustration I would suggest for the sermon is . . .
5. Pastor, did I hear you say . . .
6. How does this relate to my daily life?
7. One new insight I gained was . . .

*"All of us with unveiled faces,  
seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror,  
are **being transformed** into his likeness with everlasting glory."  
2 Cor 3:18, NRSV, emphasis added*

## *UNIT 2*

### *Transforming Grace*

7. The Transforming Moment: A New Start with a New Heart
8. Sanctifying Grace: The Transforming Moment
9. Sanctification: The Transforming Journey

#### Unit 2 Objectives

To help students

1. (Cognitive) understand the utterly essential role of the transforming grace of God as requisite for any spiritual formation, instantaneous or gradual
2. (Affective) humbly appreciate one's need for the grace of the transforming moment and the transforming journey
3. (Psychomotor) encounter transforming grace, receive it, and to incorporate it into one's identity, life, and ministry

# Lesson 7: Transforming Moments: A New Start with a New Heart

## Due this Lesson

Soul-winning plans  
Journaling

## Learner Objectives

To help students

- understand the priority of the new birth in the spiritual life and learn how to help others find this transforming moment, this life-changing encounter with the Living Lord who can give us a “new start with a new heart”
- appreciate anew the experience of the saving grace of God, and desire to serve Christ by sharing the “Good News” with others
- gain confidence in the knowledge of the Scripture and the gospel and in the ability to use that knowledge to bring others to Christ, and to demonstrate that faith and confidence by witnessing during the coming week

## Homework Assignments

### Research

Begin an annotated bibliography on the Wesleyan-Holiness doctrine of sanctification or holiness. Each student is to find at least five books (or chapters in books) on the subject and at least three magazine or journal articles on the subject. The student is to write a one-paragraph “annotation” that describes the main thrust of the book, chapter, or article. Be sure that such works as the following are included:

- *Love Made Perfect* and *Wholeness in Christ* by William Greathouse
- *Entire Sanctification* by J. Kenneth Grider
- *All Loves Excelling* by John A. Knight
- *Reflecting God* (Chapters 9–10), Wesley Tracy, *et al.*
- For articles check past issues of *Holiness Today* and the *Herald of Holiness*.
- Check also the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* on the internet.

### Journal Prompt

Write a one-stanza song of praise to God for your own “transforming moment” of conversion. If you need help to get started, sing some songs such as “Why Should He Love Me So?” “Victory in Jesus,” “All That Thrills My Soul Is Jesus.”

## Bible Study: Two Conversion Stories

A. Read Acts 8: 26-40—the conversion of the Ethiopian officer

B. Read Acts 9: 1-19—the conversion of St. Paul

C. Compare and Contrast:

In what ways are these conversion accounts alike?

How do they differ from each other and from your personal experience?

D. List at least four things we learn about how to find Christ and how to lead others to a transforming encounter with Him from Paul, Philip, and the Ethiopian?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

## John Wesley's Conversion Testimony

The young John Wesley had struggled for years to find peace with God. He had become a priest, a missionary, and an Oxford professor in the process. Yet peace did not come—until May 24, 1738, when—well, let him tell his own story:

I resolved to seek it [salvation by faith alone] unto the end, 1. By absolutely renouncing all dependence . . . upon *my own* works or righteousness; on which I had really grounded my hope, though I knew it not, from my youth up. 2. By adding to the constant use of all the means of grace, continual prayer for this very thing, justifying, saving grace, a full reliance on the blood of Christ shed for *me*; a trust in Him, as *my* Christ, as *my* sole justification, sanctification, and redemption.

I continued thus to seek it, (though with strange indifference, dullness, and coldness, and unusually frequent relapses into sin) till Wednesday, May 24 [1738]. I think it was about five in the morning that I opened my New Testament on those words, "there are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4). Just as I went out I opened it again on those words, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." In the afternoon I was invited to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, "Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord hear my voice."

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: And an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. . . . I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart.

*Works*, 1:102-103.

### For Reflection

1. Not included in this excerpt is the fact that four friends had called on Wesley about a "heart-felt" experience of religion. Thus, friends and their personal witness had a part in Wesley's conversion.
2. What part did music play? The Scriptures? Prayer? Preaching? Teaching?
3. In what ways is Wesley's conversion experience like the ones in Acts 8 and 9? In what ways is it different?
4. In what way is Wesley's experience like your own? Unlike your own?

## My Story: How God Found Me

1. I first came to know that I needed God when: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. The person, experience, sermon, song or book that showed me how to come to Christ was:

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3. The scripture that helped me most was: \_\_\_\_\_

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4. The person(s) who cared enough about me to help me find Christ was:

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5. The events of the day when I was saved went like this (make an outline or use the back of this sheet if more space is needed):

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6. My thoughts and feelings when I knew that I had been born again could best be described as:

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7. The first person I told about my conversion was: \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Today, my love for Christ is: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Steps Toward the Transforming Moment

As your learning leader gives a lecture on "Steps Toward the Transforming Moment," use this guide as a net to catch the most important ideas.

| <b><i>1. Confession</i></b>    | <b><i>3. Trust in Jesus Alone</i></b> |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Key Ideas:                     | Key Ideas:                            |
| Key Scriptures:                | Key Scriptures:                       |
| One thing I could add is . . . | One thing I could add is . . .        |

| <b><i>2. Repentance</i></b>    | <b><i>4. Assurance</i></b>     |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Key Ideas:                     | Key Ideas:                     |
| Key Scriptures:                | Key Scriptures:                |
| One thing I could add is . . . | One thing I could add is . . . |

## Lesson 8: Sanctifying Grace: The Transforming Moment

### Due this Lesson

Research  
Journaling

### Learner Objectives

To help students

- learn to define and explain the key concepts of sanctification as a transforming moment as taught by the Bible, the Wesleyan tradition, and by the experience of God's people
- hunger for sanctifying grace or for progress in holiness
- follow the steps toward sanctification if they have not already experienced the transforming moment of sanctifying grace and/or demonstrate that they have learned how to help other believers who hunger for sanctification and the deeper spiritual life

### Homework Assignments

#### Bible Study

Select two of the following:

The Journey of Abraham, Genesis 12—23; 25:1-11

The Journey of Joseph, Genesis 37, 39—50

The Journey of Jonah, Jonah 1—4

The Journey of Moses, Exodus 1—24

Read these life stories as journeys, as quests, as life stories about what really matters. Note such things as:

- character development
- triumphs and failures
- spiritual lessons learned
- spiritual refinement at work
- the purpose of God at work when the character may not have been aware of it

#### Make a Lifeline Chart of One of the Bible Characters:

Draw a lifeline that shows the events in his life and the spiritual ups and downs. Be prepared to share your work.

#### Journal Prompts:

- When it comes to being all love, holy love I find myself . . .
- If I had to preach a sermon on sanctification my text would be . . . and my main idea would be . . .
- My own prayer of consecration is . . .
- My deepest hungers are . . .
- The most recent time I prayed with someone who was seeking sanctifying grace was . . .

## No Higher than This

Those who complicate the doctrine of sanctification or reduce it to a lockstep formula should read this more than once:

The "heaven of heavens is love." There is nothing higher in religion; there is, in effect, nothing else; if you look for anything but more love you are looking wide of the mark . . . And when you are asking others, "Have you received this or that blessing?" if you mean anything but more love, you mean wrong; you are leading them out of the way, and putting them on a false scent. Settle it in your heart, that from the moment God has saved you from all sin, you are to aim at nothing more, but more of that love described in the thirteenth [chapter] of Corinthians. You can go no higher than this.

John Wesley, *Works*, 11:430

## The Transforming Moment of Sanctification

A new start with a new heart—what could be better. You are a living miracle already. But just when you think it doesn't get any better than this, it does!

You discover that the transformation you experienced when you were born again continues. Negative memories are being healed, old resentments are melting away. And you find yourself hungering for more and more of God. This is the Holy Spirit calling you to the blessing of sanctification. "The God of peace [wants to] sanctify you through and through" (1 Thess 5:23).

God wants to drench you in love and set you apart for holy use. This is His loving will for every believer. "It is God's will that you should be sanctified. . . . For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life" (1 Thess 4:3, 7).

God has made it His aim to make of you a Christian who is accurately described by  
Matthew 22:37  
1 Corinthians 13, and  
The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5—7)

That is, God's aim is to make you like himself—all holy love.

### How Do We Get There from Here?

How does the believer move toward the transforming moment of sanctification? It isn't done by magic, nor by rigid formula. It is not easy, for it includes crucifixion of the sinful self and a forsaking of egocentricity in favor of Christ-centered existence.

#### The Reality of the Transforming Moment of Sanctification

The Scriptures speak of the act of sanctification (Acts 15:8-9) and the journey of sanctification (2 Cor 3:18). But often the Scriptures do not directly differentiate between the two aspects of sanctification.

It is the experiences (empirical evidence, if you please) of God's people through the centuries that makes us expect that God will cleanse our hearts and fill us with the Holy Spirit in a "twinkling of an eye" experience that once and for all puts Christ on the throne at the center of our being.

The 100 or more denominations in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition didn't make up a second work of grace. We have simply observed that generally this is the way God works in setting us free from inner sin.

John Wesley, over a period of some three years, personally interviewed some 1,000 persons who had found the deeper life of holiness. This is what he found:

Every one of them was exceeding clear in their experience. Everyone (after the most careful inquiry) I have not found one exception . . . has declared that his deliverance from sin [entire sanctification] was *instantaneous*; that the change was wrought in a moment. Had half of these, or one-third, or one in twenty declared it was gradually wrought in them, I would have believed this in regard

to *them*, and thought that some were gradually sanctified and some instantaneously.

But as I have not found, in so long a space of time, a single person speaking thus: as all who believe they are sanctified declare with one voice that the change was wrought in a moment, I cannot but believe that sanctification is commonly, if not always, an instantaneous work ("On Patience," *Works*, 6:491).

In his classic *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, John Wesley said:

Beyond all possibility of exception . . . my brother and I maintained . . . That this [sanctification] is received merely by faith . . . given instantaneously, in one moment. . . . There is a gradual work of God in the soul . . . generally speaking, it is a long time . . . before sin is destroyed. There is a gradual work both before and after that moment [of sanctification] (*Works*, 11:393, 423).

The saints in every age have reported a crisis experience of God after conversion that ushered them into the deeper life. The testimony of Billy Graham and of Lloyd Ogilvie come to mind among contemporary well-known Christians who long after conversion found a place of utter consecration that led to a pivotal deeper experience of God.

### **The Problem of Inner Sin and the Need for Cleansing**

One thing that prevents many believers from finding the deeper life is remaining inner sin.

As you follow the Spirit into the sunrise of sanctifying grace, you become more aware of the love and holiness of God. The closer you get to Him, the more your own lack of love and your own unholy attitudes and feelings show up.

Though you have been born again—given a new start with a new heart—and though you have renounced the acts of sin that characterized your former life, you are now forced to admit that though sin does not rule in your heart it does remain.

Inward sin is not something you have, it is something you are. You grieve, for at the deepest level you want to be like Christ. But there's a part of you that treasures lust, or harbors a lurking self-idolatry, or nourishes the "need to control," or thirsts for praise, or protects a touchy ego, or affirms a cultural prejudice, or shelters unworthy motives, or rebels against continual obedience to God. A. W. Tozer called these "the hyphenated sins of the human spirit." He named some: "self-sufficiency, self-righteousness, self-love, self-pity, and self-admiration" (*Reflecting God*, 79).

The Spirit of the Lord is both tender and firm. Faithfully, He confronts you with your sinful nature. At first you may dismiss His gentle revelations. But He keeps bringing you back to the mirror of the divine Light where you can admit that you need to have your very inmost heart cleansed of sin. You find yourself ready to pray the Wesley hymn, "Show me as my soul can bear the depth of inbred sin." If you pray such a prayer, tighten your spiritual seat belt. You may be in for a jolting ride through some sin-stained slums of your inner world that are as ugly as sin.

When that happens do not “cast away your confidence” (Heb 10: 35, NKJV). Rather, wrap the robe of faith around you and hold on to God. Think of the wonderful things that God has already done in giving you a new start with a new heart. Do not despair over what God has not yet done for you. You have been born again. To that truth the Spirit bears witness as does your changed life. Take comfort in these facts.

One of Satan’s devices is to so bully the believer on the way to sanctification until he or she despairs over remaining sin rather than praise God for the regeneration miracle that He has already wrought.

The Spirit will gently lead you to loving submission to God so that you can be cleansed “from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God” (2 Cor 7: 1).

### **The Need for Self-surrender**

The key to the deeper life of holiness is self-surrender. The sinful self must be “crucified” with Christ (Rom 6:6). This is a truth verified by 20 centuries of Christian discipleship.

Those who have experienced it call it self-denial, self-transcendence, self-crucifixion, self-surrender, or, as the saints of the Middle Ages called it, “self-donation.”

One researcher reports a study of 200 of the best known works on Christian spirituality produced over 20 centuries. A common denominator showed up in the experience and writings of the pilgrims in the works studied—self-surrender. This was the case whether the author was a liberal or conservative, modern or ancient, Catholic or Protestant. One woman’s 1112-page Ph.D. dissertation summed it up: “The secret to the holy life is self-surrender, always has been, always will be.”

Who says this better than our hymn writers?

Charles Wesley:

*Show me as my soul can bear  
The depth of inbred sin;  
All the unbelief declare,  
The pride that lurks within.*

*Take me whom Thyself hast bought  
Bring into captivity  
Every high aspiring thought  
That would not bow to Thee.*

Charles Wesley, “Open Lord, My Inward Ear”  
*Wesley Hymns*, Lillenas, 1982, 37

Frances Ridley Havergal:

*Take my will and make it Thine—  
It shall be no longer mine.  
Take my heart—it is Thine own;  
It shall be Thy royal throne.*

*Take my love—my Lord I pour  
At Thy feet its treasure store.*

*Take myself and I will be  
Ever, only, all for Thee.*

Frances Ridley Havergal, "Take My Life and Let It Be"  
*Sing to the Lord, 455*

Perhaps you will like this one transliterated from the Pidgin English of the hymnal used by Christians in Papua New Guinea. It has no title, just hymn 119 but is to be sung to the tune of "Have Thine Own Way, Lord."

*You boss me, God, You boss me.  
You are the Papa, me pickinini (child).  
Suppose me got sin you straighten me.  
Me cry long [to] you, you come boss me.*

Wewak: Papua New Guinea:  
Christian Books, Melanesia, 1979.

# 10-Point Jeopardy-Style Quiz

As you listen to the lecture, "The Transforming Moment of Sanctification," try to flag the questions that go with these answers.

1. The Answer: "The sinful self" of Romans 6: 6.  
The Question:

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2. The Answer: "empirical evidence"  
The Question:

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3. The Answer: He wrote *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*.  
The Question:

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4. The Answer: "The hyphenated sins of the human spirit."  
The Question:

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5. The Answer: "The sin-stained slums of your inner world."  
The Question:

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6. The Answer: It's one of Satan's devices.  
The Question:

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7. The Answer: This Bible verse says we are to be cleansed from everything that contaminates body and spirit.  
The Question:

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8. The Answer: It is the secret to the holy life; always has been, always will be.  
The Question:

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9. The Answer: "Ever, only, all for Thee."  
The Question:

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10. The Answer: "You boss me, God."  
The Question:

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## Wesleyan-Holiness Annotated Bibliography

Each student will be asked to present one or two of the best sources he or she found. Either before the whole class or in Base Groups, be prepared to share this information about your selected sources:

1. *What is the heart of the issue?*
2. *What is the issue of the heart?*
3. *What scriptures does the source use?*
4. *What idea, in this book or article, was most appealing to you personally?*

## Steps Toward the Transforming Moment of Sanctification

1. *Know that God calls you to sanctification.*
2. *Invite God to prepare your heart.*
3. *Make your consecration complete.*
4. *Expect sanctifying grace instantaneously by faith.*
5. *Patiently follow the hunger of your soul.*
6. *In faith believing, accept God's gracious gift of the fullness of the Spirit.*
7. *A prayer for sanctifying grace:*

O God, I praise You for all that You have done for me and my brothers and sisters in Christ. Holy is Your name! I now open my heart to its depths before You.

Cleanse by the fire of Your Spirit anything that is unlike Christ. Purge my attitudes, my spirit, my affections. Consume all my sinfulness.

Fill me with Your love until I love even those who persecute or mistreat me. Make me a flame of holy love.

Take all that is mine—I hold nothing back. I claim no right to my wealth, position, or reputation. I give You my body, my soul, my freedom, and my life. Do with me as You wish. I wish only to know You better and to serve You better all the days of my life. If in Your sovereign will I am ready to receive full sanctification, please bestow that gift on my unworthy heart. If the time is not yet, if there is work yet to be done to prepare me for the fullness of the Spirit, then, Lord, help me to wait patiently and give me eyes to see what You are teaching me in order to prepare my heart.

## A Prayer of Consecration

Make this prayer from John Wesley's hand-written prayer journal your own prayer of loving submission:

O Lord Jesus,  
I give thee my body,  
My soul,  
My substance [wealth],  
My fame,  
My friends,  
My liberty, and my life:  
Dispose of me and all that is mine  
As it seems best to thee.  
I am now not mine, but thine:  
Therefore claim me as thy right,  
Keep me as thy charge, and love me as thy child.  
Fight for me when I am assaulted,  
Heal me when I am wounded,  
And revive me when I am destroyed.  
Amen.

# Lesson 9: Sanctification: The Transforming Journey

## Due this Lesson

Bible study  
Lifeline chart  
Journaling

## Learner Objectives

To help students

- be able to explain some of the ways in which the process of transformation and sanctification continue in the life rhythms of work and rest, endings and beginnings, worship and play
- appreciate the ways in which the sanctifying Spirit is working in the “big picture” of their own lives
- identify some of the refining and perfecting actions of God in their own daily lives
- respond in increased faith and trust in the providence and sovereignty of God

## Homework Assignments

### Bible Study

- Describe in two or three paragraphs your usual method of Bible study. Do not write what you “ought” to do but what you actually do.
- Study the story of Naboth’s vineyard in 1 Kings 21:1-23.
- Study Ephesians 2:1-10.

### Journal Prompts

- List in your journal endings, in-between times, and new beginnings that you have experienced in the past 10 years.
- Write a song of praise and thanksgiving that celebrates these transitions and transformations.

## From the Desert to a New Beginning

How can you tell when a new beginning is about to happen? What are the signals in your wilderness experience that you are ripe for a new and deeper walk with God?

The authors of *Reflecting God* suggest several clues:

1. When you get lost enough to find yourself.
2. When you have experienced this truth: "You never know that Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have."
3. Your unlived life offers a clue. What would be unlived if your life ended today?
4. When you have reached a state of mind in which you are willing to give up being *special* and are ready to settle for merely being *useful*.
5. When you discover where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.

(See *Reflecting God*, 142-44.)

## **A Hero's Journey**

### **A Case from Classic Literature**

1. At what points do you most identify with Odysseus?
2. What *endings* did he experience?
3. What *in-between times* and *new beginnings* did he encounter?
4. What character development or transformations did you notice?

# The Story of Solomon and Asmodeus

A legend told by Wesley Tracy

Solomon was the wisest king of all, the wisest of the wise. God had given him the gift of wisdom and a ring with a six-pointed star that bore the secret name of God, "I AM." But when it came to building the Temple of God, wise Solomon had a problem. The Torah, the Law, strictly forbade the use of iron tools in building an altar to the most high God. I mean, it is right there in the same chapter as the Ten Commandments—Exodus 20:25 says no iron tools. That's why 1 Kings 6:7 says, "No hammer, chisel or other iron tool was heard at the temple site."

So how could Solomon cut the huge stones for the construction of the Temple? His counselors reminded him that Moses had used the shamir. The shamir, a tiny creature, was so small that it could hardly be seen, but it had the power to cut through any substance on earth except lead. The shamir could, for example, cut stones on a cliff and make grooves in which, incredibly, plants and flowers manage to grow out of solid rock. You have seen the work of the shamir, haven't you?

But the shamir was under the protection of Asmodeus, the chief of demons. He lived in the "mountains of darkness" along with many other demons including three dozen female spirits called the "36 elements of darkness." There Asmodeus, the king of demons, dwelt. By his house was a large well filled with the coolest water to be found in that desert land. Each day Asmodeus would drink from his well and then seal it tight so no other could use up his water.

Solomon, the wisest of the wise, came up with a plan. He sent his faithful man Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, to the

mountains of darkness. Asmodeus was away in another land causing mischief, so Benaiah quickly drained the well and refilled it with the strongest wine. Asmodeus returned thirsty from causing strife in a distant desert land. When he saw that his well was filled with wine he was furious. The legend says that at first he refused to drink quoting in his rage the Bible verses that warn against wine-bibbing. Wine dulls the senses and a world-class demon must keep his wits about him. But, being a demon, keeping the Holy Scriptures was not on his top ten list. He soon gave in and quaffed several buckets full of wine and fell into a drunken stupor.

Solomon's men then bound the drunken demon in chains and carted him back to Solomon's court in Jerusalem. Solomon demanded that Asmodeus turn over the shamir.

"I do not carry the shamir around with me," said Asmodeus. "It is under the care of the hoopoe, the most worthy of birds. The hoopoe promised God that it would protect the shamir with its life. So you'll not be able to get it."

Solomon explained to his men that the hoopoe had custody of the shamir. When in his flights this "most worthy of birds" saw an ugly or barren craggy mountain cliff that needed the decoration or life of vines or flowers the hoopoe would take the shamir and split the cliff. Then it would bring seeds of vines, trees, and flowers in its beak and plant new life on a barren boulder.

Solomon had his men find the nest of the hoopoe. They covered it with glass. When the hoopoe returned and discovered that

she could not feed her young, she quickly flew away and brought the shamir and it shattered the glass in a second.

But Solomon's men began to throw rocks at the hoopoe, and she dropped the shamir. Solomon's men quickly grabbed it, put it in a lead box, and headed for Jerusalem. The hoopoe, having failed in its duty to keep the shamir safe, committed suicide.

But what did Solomon care, he now had the tool to cut the stones and the House of God could be built.

Asmodeus then said to Solomon, "You have the shamir, so why do you leave me in these chains. Let me go; set me free." Solomon replied, "I will let you go on one condition. You must tell me the secret of your power. You, the chief of demons, rule kingdoms far and near. What is the secret of your power?"

Asmodeus, trying to hide a sly smile on his demon face, muttered, "Take off these chains, give me your ring that bears the secret name of God, and I will gladly show you the secret of my power."

Solomon, the wisest of the wise, agreed. He quickly unchained the demon, slipped the ring off his finger and dropped it into the palm of Asmodeus, "Now keep your word," he demanded, "and show me the secret of your power."

Asmodeus instantly swelled to enormous stature with one wing that touched the ground and one that reached up into the clouds. He sucked up Solomon in his mouth and spit him out into a wilderness land 400 parasangs (about 1,500 miles) distance from Jerusalem. Asmodeus then threw the ring with the secret name of God on it far out into the ocean.

### **Lost in the Desert**

Solomon wandered lost and hungry in the wilderness. He had to beg bread to stay alive. He became emaciated, dirty, and ragged. To those he met he would pitifully say, "I am Solomon. King was I in Jerusalem." But the people only laughed.

"I am Solomon, king was I in Jerusalem." But the village children made fun of him and set their dogs on the tattered old beggar.

One day Solomon came upon a pool of water and looking in saw his reflection. His own image frightened him. It was scary for Solomon, technically the king, but what he saw in the reflecting pool was a wild man, a starved man, a beggar. There was no regal bearing, no noble, kingly air, no crown—and no ring that bore the secret name of God. "I am Solomon." He called out at the top of his voice to himself, "King was I in Jerusalem." And he trembled as those empty words echoed back to him in that lonely valley.

For years Solomon wandered, bereft, hungry, lost, trying to find his way home. Empty, humbled, impoverished he roamed on looking for Jerusalem the city of God, never forgetting that he had once been king.

He prayed to God but got only the echo of his own voice. It seemed that God was gone. God's gifts were gone—the ring, the throne, the wisdom. But it was not God who had deserted Solomon. What had deserted Solomon was his false image of God. He thought that he was so great that God would wink at his sins, his pride, his building shrines to the idols of his many wives, his deals with the devil. Solomon depended on his power—he was fiercely jealous of it. He depended on his fabulous wealth. But here in the desert he had no wealth and he had no power.

So Solomon wandered helpless in the desert stripped of wealth and the power and the wisdom that had been his very identity, the very things he depended on most—gone. Solomon would second the motion of St. Paul who thought sure he was going to die for his faith and was brought to the point of utter hopelessness. Why? Paul—the Ph.D., the member of the supreme court, the resourceful missionary—said it was so he would learn to depend on God and not on himself (2 Cor 1:9).

#### **Meanwhile Back at the Ranch . . .**

As soon as Asmodeus had disposed of Solomon—spitting him 400 parasangs from relevance—he took over Solomon’s throne. He took on the appearance, voice, crown, and throne of Solomon. The people had no clue that their king was gone and that the devil ruled in Jerusalem, the City of God.

And that is the genius of the devil, says philosopher Jacob Needleman. He can deceive us by taking on the very appearance, voice, and garb of the true self that is made in God’s image, the self that wears the signet ring with the secret name of God engraved on it. The false, sinful self can rule wearing the king’s clothes. Sounds like Solomon—but he really is Asmodeus.

Asmodeus looked like Solomon. He wore Solomon’s robe, he carried himself like Solomon when he mounted the throne as the seven heralds dutifully called out their assigned lines, which were seven warnings for the king not to betray the trust put in him.

Asmodeus walked just like the true king and stepped by the golden ox, lion, wolf, lamb the leopard, the goat, the eagle and the peacock, the falcon and the rooster, the hawk and the sparrow—all the solid gold animals and birds that decorated the lofty throne of Solomon. He walked like

Solomon, sounded like Solomon, looked like Solomon—must be Solomon!

So what if some of his judgments and actions seemed strange—which lowly subject would challenge the wisdom of Solomon, who was, after all, the wisest of the wise?

Asmodeus, acting as Solomon, the legend says, committed three grievous sins.

1. He procured a thousand wives and concubines. He could engage in a different dalliance every day for three years! No Jewish king should behave like that, the wise men said—but then Solomon was the wisest of them all.
2. He acquired many horses, and heaps and heaps of silver and gold. (Today we would say cars and stocks and bonds.)
3. He enslaved people to make them build the house of God, the Temple. Know who Solomon enslaved? Ethnic minorities—nope, I’m not making this up; it’s right there in the Bible! All the non-Jew males were recruited and enslaved, a sort of holocaust in reverse! Think about that—enslaving people to build God’s house.

The false king acted in sexual excess, in grabbing riches, in seizing more power. Even more succinctly, the masked sins were *lust, greed, and power*—an unholy trinity that will destroy any of us. If the false self, the unsanctified self, rules in us—even if he is dressed for church—the same sins will rule, maybe in disguise.

#### **Solomon’s Journey Home**

The years go by as Solomon tries to find his way home. Solomon, once king, now beggar finally gets a job—good sign—the one-time king is now a dishwasher in the kitchen of the King of Ammon. He is soon promoted to cook and meets the king’s daughter, Princess Naamah, as he serves her a spinach soufflé or maybe it was crème brûlée. Her name means “The

Lovely" or "The Lovely one." At any rate Princess Lovely likes the food and loves the cook. And Solomon is nuts about her too. They fall in love. She is determined to marry the cook; her father, the king, is determined that she will not. When the lovers will not take "no" for an answer the king orders them executed. In the end the king moderates his anger and exiles them penniless in a wilderness of a land far away.

Solomon and Naamah struggle through many trials. Then, near the end of his three-year journey, Solomon and Naamah wander near the seashore. There fishermen are selling their catch. Solomon has one coin left. He approaches a fisherman and offers him his last coin for a large fish flopping in the basket. The fisherman looks at the coin. Solomon's own crowned head is engraved upon it. But Solomon doesn't point that out anymore. He doesn't look like a king and no one has bowed to him in three years. The fisherman examines the coin and laughs out loud. Not enough to buy that fish. He pockets the coin, pulls a smaller fish out of the basket and shoves it toward Solomon.

Solomon takes the fish to Naamah and they prepare for what may be their last meal. As the good wife opens the fish she sees something sparkling. "Look, Solomon, my husband—a ring!"

Solomon looks and recognizes the ring that God had given him, the ring with the six-pointed star engraved with the secret name of God. The very ring that Asmodeus threw into the ocean three years earlier. For three long years Solomon has been trying to tell others, "I am Solomon, King was I in Jerusalem." Now he puts on the ring and declares, "I am Solomon. King **am** I in Jerusalem." The legend says that the regal glory returned to his face and that he stood before Naamah like a sturdy cedar. Though he was still dressed in beggar's

raggs it was plain that he was the king and the son of a king.

Philosopher Jacob Needleman, in the book *Money and the Meaning of Life*, says, "I too am Solomon, remembering that I was once a king, but having lost the gift, the ring with the secret name of God, I wander lost, impoverished, empty while the false self sits on the inner throne. But when the ring of God, the gift of God's grace is found, I become king. And the true self engraved with the very secret name of God, ascends the throne.

Solomon now knew his way home. He marches straight to Jerusalem. Showing his ring finger he confronts Asmodeus the chief of demons. As soon as the demon sees the ring with the secret name of God he quickly surrenders and flees to the "mountains of darkness."

If we were to write that ending, we would describe some cataclysmic battle, some fierce struggle, the clashing of war chariots, a gladiatorial win for Solomon, maybe a dramatic sword fight worthy of *Crouching Tiger; Hidden Dragon*.

But the legend is wiser than we are. There is no battle. In the presence of the true self bearing the signet ring of the most high God, the false self who has been ruling in the heart with lust, greed, and power-grabbing, simply flees. That is to say: when the heart is truly open to the grace and dominion of God, transformation happens and the false self flees away like Asmodeus heading far away to the mountains of darkness on the double—there is no room for greed, lust, and power-grabbing (or any of their cousins) in the transformed heart. It is as John Wesley described it, "Love expelling sin."



*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved,  
not as a workman who does not need to be ashamed  
and who correctly handles the word of truth. . . . In  
a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver,  
but also of wood and clay;  
some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble.  
If a man cleanses himself . . . he will be an instrument for noble purposes,  
made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.  
2 Timothy 2: 15, 20-21*

## **UNIT 3**

# ***The Personal Spiritual Disciplines***

10. Three Ways to Read the Bible
11. Prayer: Adoration, Praise, and Thanksgiving
12. Prayer: Confession, Intercession, and Petition
13. Journaling as a Spiritual Discipline
14. Fasting and the Disciplines of Abstinence

### Unit 3 Objectives

To help students

1. (Cognitive) analyze and evaluate the personal spiritual disciplines of Bible study, prayer, journaling, and abstinence
2. (Affective) embrace with open hearts the personal spiritual disciplines as part of their own quest for Christlikeness
3. (Psychomotor) encounter and experience the personal disciplines of Bible study, prayer, journaling, and the disciplines of abstinence, incorporating them into daily life and ministry

# Lesson 10: Three Ways to Read the Bible

## Due this Lesson

Description of your Bible study method  
Journaling

## Learner Objectives

To help students

- be able to define and explain the significance of reading the Bible for information, transformation, and formation
- appreciate the privilege and need of making balanced Bible study a life-long pursuit
- devise a personal plan for ongoing, balanced study of the Bible

## Homework Assignments

### Bible Study Plan

Devise a two-week plan for your daily personal Bible study. Cite the books or passages to be studied.

- Be sure that the plan includes informational, transformational, and formative elements. Label the three elements.
- Cite the tools, aids, and methods that you will use.

### Journal Prompt

In your journaling time record your reflections on the three most significant times of Bible study that you have experienced in the past year. Be specific. State the passage, the setting, others who may have shared the experience, and how your life and/or ministry has changed because of those experiences.



## **Naboth and His Vineyard: 1 Kings 21**

1. What are the moral or ethical questions?
2. What are the legal questions?
3. What are the personal questions?
4. What are the political questions?
5. What are theological or religious questions?

## Reading for Transformation

Isaiah 57:13-15

**Text:** "When you cry out for help, let your collection of idols save you! The wind will carry all of them off, a mere breath will blow them away" (v. 13).

**Emphatic Repetition:**

When you *cry out* for help, let your collection of *idols save you!*  
The *wind* will carry all of them off, a *mere breath* will blow them away.

**Meditation/Prayer:** O God, have I set up idols in my soul? Have I taken the deepest hungers of my heart to idols for satisfaction? Do I turn to praise, achievement, worldly possessions to satisfy the hunger for God? Break down every idol, O Lord. Help me depend only on You. My idols are playthings of the wind.

**Text:** "The man who makes me his refuge will inherit the land and possess my holy mountain" (v. 13).

**Emphatic Repetition:**

The man who makes *me his refuge* will inherit the land . . .  
The man who makes me [God] his *refuge* will *inherit the land* and *possess*  
God's holy mountain.

**Meditation/Prayer:** O my God, be my Refuge, my safe place. You are my safe place. But why do I seek You, my Refuge, so seldom? Make me hunger for Your land, long for Your holy mountain. May I thirst for You, my Refuge.

**Text:** "This is what the high and lofty One ways—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: 'I live in the high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite'" (v. 15).

**Emphatic Repetition:**

I live, *I live* . . . with him who is *contrite*.  
I live, I live . . . with him who is *lowly in spirit*.  
The high and lofty One . . . whose *name is holy* . . . lives with the contrite.  
To [in order to] *revive the spirit* of the lowly . . .  
To [in order to] revive the *heart of the contrite*.

**Meditation/Prayer:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Informational Bible Study

## Informational Foundations:

1. Look for the biblical author's intended meaning.
2. Read the Bible passage in context.
3. Identify the type of passage you are reading.
4. Consider the historical and cultural setting.
5. Consider the grammar and structure within the passage.
6. Interpret experience in the light of Scripture, not Scripture in the light of experience.
7. Always seek the full counsel of Scripture.

## **The Explorer's Method of Bible Study**

1. Observation:

2. Interpretation:

3. Correlation:

4. Evaluation:

5. Application:

## **Bible Study: Asking the Text Questions**

1. What does this passage tell me about God?
2. What does this passage tell me about Jesus Christ?
3. What does this passage tell me about the Holy Spirit?
4. Is there a sin to avoid?
5. Is there a command to be obeyed?
6. Is there a prayer to make my own?
7. Is there a promise to claim?
8. What does this passage teach me about myself?
9. What does this passage say about Christian service?
10. Is there something here I should memorize?
11. Is there something here I should share?
12. Is there an example to follow or avoid?

## Bible Study: Stepping into the Scene

### A. Read Luke 12:13-21

### B. Get the Scene in Mind

It's early in the day. Jesus has called His disciples together for a staff meeting. It is going to be a long day. Already Jesus' fame has spread, and a huge crowd is spreading out before them in a valley. But before the preaching, teaching, and miracles are to begin, Jesus called the staff meeting. They are on the crest of the hill partially hidden by cedars and boulders. It is still cool where the shaded staff meeting is taking place. Jesus is lecturing His dozen disciples about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (vv. 12:1-2), comforting them with God's providence (vv. 12:4-7), and about faithful witnessing for Christ (vv. 8-12).

This staff meeting is then interrupted by a self-absorbed joker who demands that Jesus settle a financial fight. By the time Jesus gets around to answering, the crowd has surged forward, the staff meeting is over for now, and Jesus addresses the throng. Read verses 13-21 again in light of this scene setting.

### C. Working Individually, Respond to These Items

1. Imagine the Bible scene before you.
2. What is the temperature, the weather, the time of day? What sounds do you hear? What scenery? What smells are present? What animals are there?
3. Step into the scene yourself. Who is standing on your left? Your right?
4. How is the person next to you dressed? How is Jesus dressed? The disciples?
5. Listen to the dialogue, the parable, catch every word. Don't miss anything.
6. Notice the characters in the story:

|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| The Multitude  | The Disciples |
| The Questioner | The Rich Fool |
| Jesus          | God           |
7. With what character did you identify most? Which did you resist most?
8. What did you perceive Jesus' mood and attitude to be?
9. Did you get any new insights into the meaning of this Bible passage? Jot down your feelings, insights, ideas.

### D. Step Out of the Scene and Write a Letter

Step out of the scene and think it over. Then write a letter (or e-mail message) to one of the characters. Tell him whatever is on your heart. Write only three or four paragraphs. Be prepared to share your letter with the group.

# Lesson 11: Prayer: Adoration, Praise, and Thanksgiving

## Due this Lesson

Bible study plan  
Journaling

## Learner Objectives

To help students

- discover the Bible as a textbook on prayer, especially the prayers of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving
- appreciate the significance of adoration and thanksgiving which is often neglected in personal Christian prayer
- develop a growing vocabulary of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving and incorporate it into their personal devotional life

## Homework Assignments

### Choose an assignment:

Students have a choice among four options. Choose one of the following assignments to complete and hand in at the beginning of the next session.

- **Artwork:** Refine the art of the Woman with the Torch and the Pitcher begun in class today. Make it the very best that you can do. If you have no talent in art, select one of the other options.

Draw, sculpt, or paint the 12th-century woman made famous by the disciples of Bernard of Clairvaux. She has the pitcher of water to quench the fires of hell and the flaming torch to burn up the pleasures of heaven so that believers can appreciate God for His own sake and not for the hope of pleasure or the escape of pain.

Will your art depict her on a horse, hillside, a cloud, a street? How is she dressed? What color is her hair, her skin, her clothing? What expression does she have on her face, in her eyes—holy awe, holy anger, the plea of a teacher or parent?

- **A prayer-life survey, administered and tabulated:** Do a “prayer-life” survey of at least 12 persons. Do not report names, but descriptions of the person would be useful, i.e., 19-year-old-college sophomore, experienced pastor, middle-aged businessman, etc. Tabulate the results in an organized manner and report trends and discoveries. Ask at least 10 questions. You could use questions like these:
  1. In a word, how would you describe your prayer life?
  2. What book or sermon on prayer has helped you most?
  3. What examples of prayer in the Bible come to mind?
  4. When you pray what place do praise and thanksgiving have in the prayers you offer?
  5. What plan or method of prayer (if any) do you use?
  6. 10. (prepare five more questions)
- **A song of praise and prayer:** Study Psalm 108: 1-5 and write the lyrics to a song of praise. Use a familiar tune if you wish. Hand in

your work. Be prepared to teach the song to the class. Use guitar, piano, or recorded accompaniment.

- **Young adult lesson plan:**

1. Study the Song of Mary, Luke 1: 46-55. Plan a lesson on prayer based on this prayer of praise.
2. Set your objectives by asking and answering these three questions: What do I want my students to KNOW? What do I want them to FEEL? What do I want them to DO?
3. Devise two or three learning activities that will help you reach your objectives.

### **Journal Prompt**

You have selected one of the assignments above to complete and hand-in. Select another one to write about in your journal. You do not have to do the whole assignment, just reflect on it in your journal. Suppose you have no art talent, so you do not choose the art assignment about the lady with the torch and water. Nevertheless, you may want to journal your response to the questions that the image raises.

# The Bible: Our Textbook on Prayer

## The Elements and Sequence of Biblical Prayer

1. Adoration or praise (for who God is)
2. Thanksgiving and praise (for what God does)
3. Confession (of sin or need)
4. Repentance (turning from sin or disobedience to God)
5. Affirmation of trust, faith, hope
6. Intercession (praying for others)
7. Petition (asking God for help or guidance)

### Study Biblical Prayers

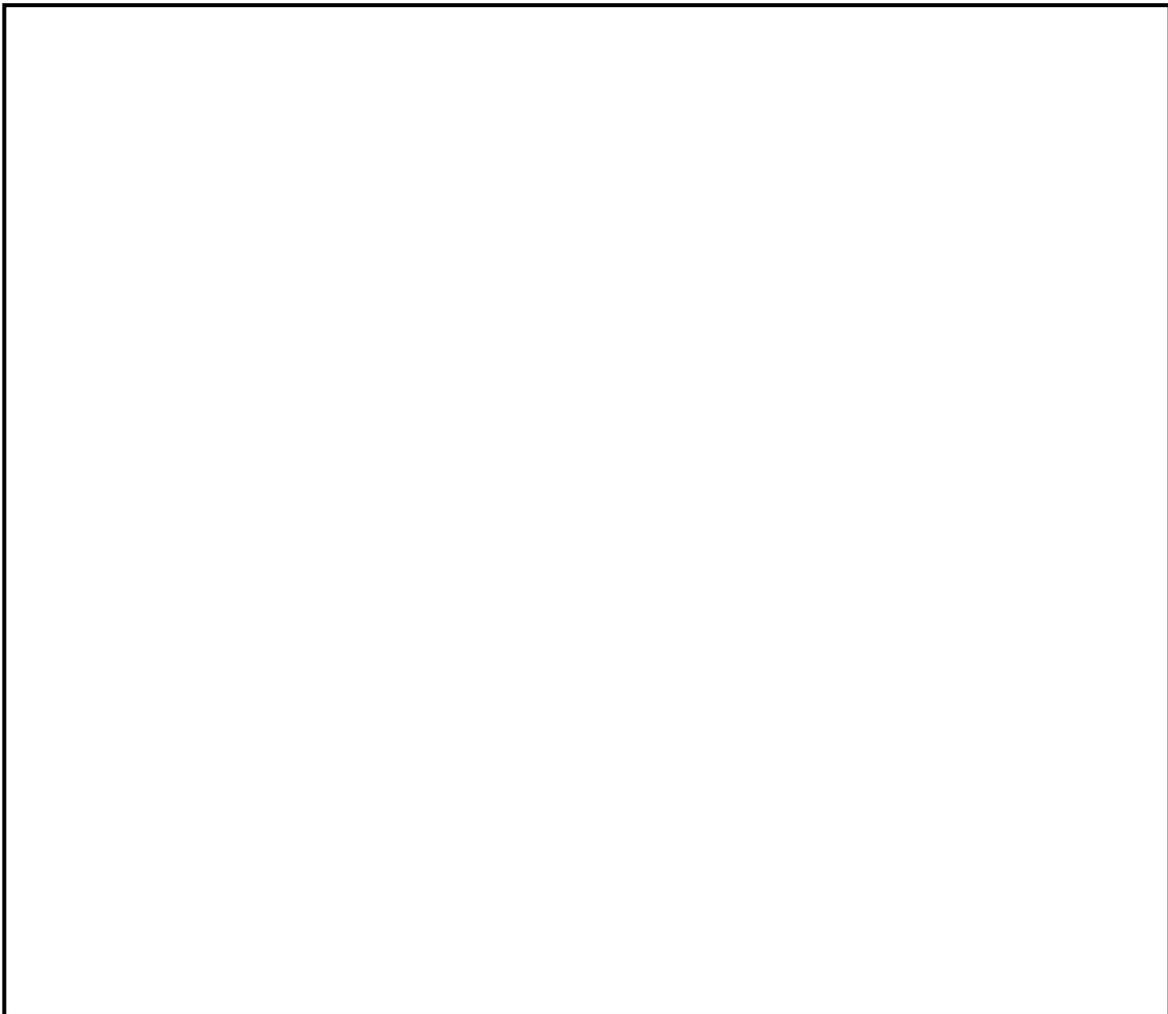
Study the following, marking and noting the elements and sequences of prayer listed above.

1. The Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV) and Luke 11:1-4
2. A Prayer Psalm: Psalm 90. Compare to the hymn "O God Our Help in Ages Past" (*Sing to the Lord*, 95)
3. A Nation's Prayer: Lamentations 5
4. St. Paul at Prayer: Three times in 1 Thessalonians Paul pauses for a short prayer for the believers. (1:2-3; 3:11-13; 5:23-24)

## **Praising God for His Own Sake: The Torch and the Pitcher**

The 12th-century disciples of Bernard of Clairvaux made popular the vision of a woman carrying a pitcher of water in one hand and a torch in the other. All over France they carried drawings and preached sermons that said with the pitcher of water the woman would put out the fires of hell. With the torch she would burn up the pleasures of heaven. With the punishment of hell and the glories of heaven not scaring people or coaxing people into righteous living and self-serving prayers, people would be able to simply love God for His own sake and offer prayers of adoration and praise that had no vested self-interest.

Make a drawing or sketch here of this woman. Will your art depict her on a horse, a hillside, a cloud, a busy street? How is she dressed? What color is her hair, her skin, her clothing? What expression does she have on her face, in her eyes—holy awe, holy anger, the plea of a teacher or parent?



## **Praying a Psalm of Praise: Psalm 104** *A Reader's Theater Approach*

Reader 1: Verses 1-4, Majestic Creator

Reader 2: Verses 5-9, Foundations of the earth

Reader 3: Verses 10-13, Springs of water

Reader 4: Verses 14-18, Fertility of creation

Reader 1: Verses 19-23, Day and night

Reader 2: Verses 24-26, The mighty sea and its creatures

Reader 3: Verses 27-30, God, Sustainer of life

All Readers: Verses 31-35, Let my soul praise Him

## Build Your Adoration Vocabulary

Here is a prompt for the first three and the last

A—Almighty

J—

S—

B—Blessed

K—

T—

C—Creator

L—

U—

D—

M—

V—

E—

N—

W—

F—

O—

X—

G—

P—

Y—

H—

Q—

Z—Zenith of Glory

I—

R—



# **Biblical Prayers of Thanksgiving**

## **My Own Prayer of Thanksgiving**

For what three things that God has *done* do you wish to thank Him today?

For what three things do you wish to praise God for *being* rather than *doing*?

# Lesson 12: Prayer: Confession, Intercession, and Petition

## Due this Lesson

Choice of assignments  
Journaling

## Learner Objectives

To help students

- be able to define and explain prayers of confession, intercession, and petition and state their significance for the holy life
- own the need to offer prayers of confession, intercession, and petition
- examine their own prayer life and build the habit of offering prayers of confession, intercession, and petition

## Homework Assignments

### Journal Prompts

- In your journal write a prayer of confession that could be used in a worship service. Be sure to word it to take in all three dimensions of confession used in today's lesson.
- Use one of the four methods of intercessory prayer explored in today's lesson. After putting it into practice for several days, reflect on it in your journal.
- Write a dialogue with the apostle John about his "conditions of prayer" that were studied in this lesson.

### Harvesting Our Journals

Bring to class the spiritual life journal that you have been writing in since the first day of this course. The learning leader will check to see that you have the journal with you. The learning leader will not read your spiritual life journal in detail but will simply look to see what kind of regular entries are made and in what ways your journal is organized.

No one will be pressured to share anything from the journal that he or she wishes to keep private, but we will harvest the best of the journaling experience as we share in small groups.

## **Three Dimensions of the Prayer of Confession**

As your learning leader lectures on the "Prayer of Confession," take notes in the space provided.

### **1. Confession of Sin**

### **2. Confession of the Need for Sanctifying Grace**

### **3. Confession in the Prayers of the Sanctified**

## For Discussion of The Prayer of Confession

### The "In Other Words" Exercise

St. Augustine wrote, "Before God can deliver us we must undeceive ourselves." In that spirit, consider the following list of hazards to confession. The fact is, we need grace even to pray the prayer of confession properly. Some of our motives are muddled or invisible to us even as we pray. But by God's grace we ask Him to guide our confession away from the hazards and side streets that distract us.

Think about each item on this list. Try to clarify and amplify each one "In Other Words" as you explain it to the class or your discussion group.

- 1. You may ask for forgiveness without offering forgiveness.*
- 2. You may bewail the sins of humanity, but not your own.*
- 3. You can call your sin by a lesser name, like mistake or human frailty, tough love, or handing out justice.*
- 4. You can come up with a thousand justifications for your sins.*
- 5. You can look at your sorry record and declare that you are unredeemable.*
- 6. You can deny that you have sinned.*
- 7. You can daily morbidly focus on yourself rather than God or others who need prayer.*
- 8. You can confess your sin and depravity with no hatred for it and with no intention or will to forsake it.*
- 9. You can keep on confessing humiliating sins for which God has long ago forgiven you, praying as if you questioned His forgiveness.*
- 10. You can confess a sin, but fail to make the restitution that God requires.*

# The Prayer of Intercession

Lesson 1: John 16:5-7

Lesson 2: Romans 8:34

Lesson 3: Romans 8:26-27

## Four Teachings on Intercessory Prayer

After presenting several Bible passages on intercession, your learning leader will present four teachings on praying for others. Take notes in the space provided.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Teaching 1: Intercession is a priestly ministry.</p>   | <p>Teaching 2: "My heart can become the place where God can hear the prayer for my neighbors and embrace them with his love."<br/>—Henri Noewen</p>   |
| <p>Teaching 3: In the intercessory prayer of suffering we "voluntarily take unto ourselves the griefs and sorrows of others in order to set them free."<br/>—Richard Foster</p> | <p>Teaching 4: By repenting for unsaved persons, "We are taking their . . . guilt and perdition upon ourselves and pleading to God for them. We are doing vicariously what they cannot [or will not] do for themselves."<br/>—Dietrich Bonhoeffer</p> |

## How Do You Feel About All This?

### Think about the power of intercession to

- Create a place for God and others to meet
- Engage in the ministry of holding the agony of another in one's heart
- Become a repenting prayer that helps others find the Lord

### Which of the following most nearly matches your own response to these teachings?

- A. Lord, forgive me for not praying more for others.
- B. I didn't know I could do so much to help.
- C. God would never listen to me.
- D. Intercession sounds heavy and depressing.
- E. I will plan to pray for others every day—starting today.
- F. I wish someone would pray for me like that.

Adapted from the *Reflecting God Workbook*, 79.

## Four Ways to Practice Intercessory Prayer

### One: The Out-of Place Ring—Special Days of Prayer

E. Dee Freeborn, in *The Upward Call*, shares a method of intercession for family members. He says the birthdays in his family come on the 2nd, 21st, and 30th days of the month. Therefore, he prays especially for his wife and two children *every month* on those days. As far as prayer support goes, it gives them 12 birthdays a year. "To remember, I switch a ring or watch to another hand or arm. Every time I notice the 'out of place' ring or watch during the day I breathe a prayer for that family member (91).

Discuss ways to implement this method in a small group, family, or church.

### Two: Praying the 23rd Psalm for Others

Insert the name of someone you are praying for into the blanks where personal pronouns appear in the text of the *Today's English Version* of the 23rd Psalm.

The Lord is \_\_\_\_\_'s shepherd;  
\_\_\_\_\_ has everything he/she needs.

He leads \_\_\_\_\_ in fields of green grass and  
leads \_\_\_\_\_ to quiet pools of fresh water.

He gives \_\_\_\_\_ new strength.

He guides \_\_\_\_\_ in the right paths, as he has promised.

Even if he/she goes through deepest darkness, \_\_\_\_\_ will  
Not be afraid, Lord, because you are with him/her.

Your shepherd's rod and staff protect \_\_\_\_\_. You prepare a  
banquet for \_\_\_\_\_ where all his/her enemies can see  
\_\_\_\_\_;

You welcome \_\_\_\_\_ as an honored guest and fill  
\_\_\_\_\_ 's cup to the brim.

I know that your goodness and love will be with \_\_\_\_\_ all  
\_\_\_\_\_ 's life; and your house will be \_\_\_\_\_ 's home  
as long as he/she lives. Amen.

Pray this way for one or more persons in your group. Talk about ways to use this in small groups, youth camp, or retreats.

### Three: Praying the Lord's Prayer for Others

Insert the name of the person for which you are praying into the blanks.

\_\_\_\_\_ 's Father who art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name in \_\_\_\_\_.

Thy kingdom come in \_\_\_\_\_.

Thy will be done in \_\_\_\_\_ on earth just as if she/he were with you in heaven.

Give \_\_\_\_\_ this day her/his daily bread, and forgive \_\_\_\_\_ her/his trespasses as she/he forgives those who trespass against her/him.

Lead not \_\_\_\_\_ into temptation, but deliver her/him from the evil one.

Let \_\_\_\_\_ 's joy be your kingdom, your power, and your glory forever. Amen.

In what church groups could this plan be used? Try praying for others in this way when you do not know how to pray for the person.

### Four: Five-Fingered Prayer

This method is especially helpful for families with children who are learning to pray. Several versions of this exercise are in print. This one is adapted from the *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*, 31. In your group put this into practice. Think of ways this plan could be used by new Christians, families, or youth groups.

1. The Little Finger—this is the smallest and weakest finger. Pray for someone who is weak and feeling vulnerable right now.
2. The Second Finger—this finger is seldom used alone. Still it is an important part of the team. Pray for someone who quietly works behind the scenes without fanfare or acclaim.
3. The Middle Finger—this is the tallest of the hand. Pray for someone in high office with heavy responsibilities.
4. The Index Finger—this is the hardest working of all the fingers. Pray for someone who works very hard.
5. The Thumb—the thumb is the closest to you. Pray for someone you love very much.

## What Did You Mean by That?

Suppose you had to explain the following concepts about the prayer of petition to a class of 12-year-olds. What would you add to these statements to make them more clear and useful?

**Concept 1:** Richard Foster writes, "Petition . . . is not a lower form of prayer. It is our staple diet. In a childlike expression of faith we bring our daily needs and desires to our heavenly Father. . . . It is a false humility to stand back and not share our deepest needs. His [God's] heart is wounded by our reticence (*Prayer*, 178-79).

**Concept 2:** Jesus never outgrew His need for the prayer of petition. That's a strong sign that you and I won't either.

**Concept 3:** Ways in which God answers our petitions:

- "Yes, I thought you would never ask."
- "Yes, and here's more."
- "Not yet."
- "No, I love you too much."
- "No, but My grace is sufficient."

**Concept 4:** "A day without prayer is a boast against God" (Owen Carr).

**Concept 5:** "God is always listening, more ready to hear than we are to pray" (William Barclay).

**Concept 6:** "'Thy kingdom come' (Luke 11:2, KJV) is a petition not for what we want, but for what God wants. We are so apt to think that prayer is asking God for what we want, whereas true prayer is asking God for what He wants" (William Barclay, *The Letters of John and Jude*, in *The Daily Study Bible Series*, 116).

**Concept 7:** Jesus teaches us to pray, "Thy will be done" not "Thy will be changed."

## The Conditions for Answered Prayer

Take notes in the space provided as your learning leader presents St. John's "conditions for answered prayer."

1. Obedience—1 John 3:21-24

2. Remaining in Christ—John 15:7

3. Praying in His Name and for His Sake—  
John 14:13-14

## Lesson 13: Journaling as a Spiritual Discipline

### Due this Lesson

Journaling

### Learner Objectives

To help students

- understand the historic and current values and techniques of spiritual journaling
- embrace the discipline of spiritual journaling as a means to deepen their relationship with God, enhance spiritual growth, increase self-knowledge, and integrate their lives
- pledge to do spiritual journaling regularly—even beyond the duration of this course
- evaluate their journaling experiences so far and share their insights with class members

### Homework Assignments

#### Bible Study

Next session we deal with five kinds of fasting

1. Fasting food for the body in order to provide a feast for the soul
2. Fasting indulgence in favor of chastity (discipline of sexual urges)
3. Fasting social company in order to make room for solitude
4. Fasting noise and entertainment in order to make time for silence
5. Fasting acquisitiveness in order to live in frugality or Christian simplicity
6. Fasting self-promotion in favor of secrecy

Find what the Bible says about these themes. Start your search with Matthew 6:16-18, Psalm 1:2, Isaiah, 30:15-16, and add other passages that relate to the types of fasting listed above.

#### Journal Prompt:

After this week's intensive study of spiritual journaling, implement at least two "upgrades" in your journal. Be prepared to share the upgrades with your group if asked.

## Why Keep a Spiritual Life Journal?

As your learning leader lectures about the reasons to keep a spiritual life journal, fill in the missing key words in the outline below.

1. You will learn a lot that you really need to know about your \_\_\_\_\_, that "ghost continent" within.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ will emerge, revealing that your life has not been as \_\_\_\_\_ as you thought.
3. Your capacities and skills in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, confession, and prayer will increase.
4. A regular time to reflect and write can help bring \_\_\_\_\_ to the flashing forces that reduce you to flustered ineffectiveness.
5. Journaling helps to clarify your \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, presumptions, and opinions by measuring them against \_\_\_\_\_ standards.
6. Journaling is one way that you explore the \_\_\_\_\_ of your own spiritual journey.
7. Your spiritual journal will help you discover and act upon the \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Your journal will become a friend and \_\_\_\_\_ as you face those \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ moments.
9. Journaling helps many people develop a \_\_\_\_\_ lifestyle marked by joy, \_\_\_\_\_, and hope.
10. Journaling can help break the power of \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Your journal can sometimes serve as a \_\_\_\_\_ for emotions that threaten to get out of control.
12. Journaling is about growth in grace, that is, \_\_\_\_\_.

What else belongs on this list?

## Affirmation

I do take growth in Christlikeness seriously. Therefore, I covenant with myself to start and finish this spiritual life devotional journey. I promise with all my heart to take some time each day for myself, my Lord, and my journal. My plan is to spend \_\_\_\_\_ minutes a day for \_\_\_\_\_ days each week with my journal for the duration of this course and for at least three additional months.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# What Goes into a Spiritual Journal?

## Types of Entries

Journalers often make entries in categories such as the following. One will not write in all of these categories daily. Usually two or three areas will dominate a day's entries.

1. Major events, significant happenings in your work or study.
2. Family matters.
3. Key relationships and conversations at home, school, work.
4. Important ideas encountered from reading, thinking, writing, or discussion.
5. Achievement or failures that occurred this day.
6. Feelings: the strongest feelings of contentment, joy, happiness, hope; the emotional lows, depression, discouragement, fear, guilt, worry, etc.
7. Internal happenings: intuitions, new appreciations, inner convictions, insights about your character or self.
8. Major news stories: floods, war, strikes, peace treaties, etc.
9. Notable physical experiences: exercise, work, illness, exhaustion, etc.
10. Spiritual events: prayer, Bible study, worship, etc.
11. Affirmations, conclusions, decisions, commitments made, or beliefs clarified or confirmed.
12. Spiritual failure, besetting sins, repentance, etc.
13. Acts of ministry or Christian service.

## Sampling Famous Journals

### John Wesley's Journal

(Excerpts from December 22, 1776—January 15, 1777)

I returned to London; and on Sunday 22 buried the remains of Elizabeth Duchesne; a person eminently upright of heart, yet for many years a child of labour and sorrow. For near forty years she was zealous of good works, and . . . shortened her days by labouring for the poor beyond her strength. But her end is peace. She now rests from her labours, and her works follow her.

Tues. 31—We concluded the year with solemn praise to God [the New Year's Eve watch night service]. . . . It has never been intermitted one year . . . since the year 1738; in which my brother and I began to preach that strange doctrine of salvation by faith.

Wed. January 1—We met, as usual, to renew our covenant with God [The Wesley Covenant Service]. It was a solemn season, wherein many found his power present to heal . . . .

Thurs. 2—I began expounding, in order, the book of Ecclesiastes. I never before had so clear a sight either of the meaning or the beauties of it. Neither did I imagine that the several parts of it were in so exquisite a manner connected together; all tending to prove the grand truth—that there is no happiness out of [outside of] God.

Wed. 8—I looked over the manuscripts of that great and good man, Charles Perronet. I did

not think he had so deep communion with God. I know exceeding few that equal him; and had he had a University education, there would have been few finer writers in England.

Mon. 13—I took the opportunity of spending an hour every morning with the Preachers, as I did with my pupils at Oxford. . . .

Wed. 15—I began visiting those of our society who lived in Bethnal-Green hamlet. Many of them I found in such poverty that few can conceive of. . . . O why do not all the rich that fear God constantly visit the poor? Can they spend part of their spare time better? Certainly not. So they will find in that day when "every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour."

Such another scene I was the next day. . . . I have not found any such distress, no, not in the prison of Newgate. One poor man was just creeping out of his sick-bed, to his ragged wife and three little children; who were more than half naked, and the very picture of famine; when one bringing in a loaf of bread, they all ran, seized upon it, and tore it to pieces in an instant."

*The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 3rd ed., 14 vols. (London: Methodist Book Room, 1872; reprint, Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1978), 4:91-92.

### St. Augustine's *Confessions*

(An excerpt from book eight of his journal.) At age 31 Augustine was trying to break away from a licentious life of wine, women, and song—particularly women.

The very toy of toys, and vanity of vanities, my ancient mistresses, still held me; they plucked my fleshly garments, and whispered softly, "Dost thou cast us off?" . . . "What defilements did they suggest! What shame! . . . Yet they did retard me, so that I hesitated . . . to shake myself free from them . . . a violent habit saying to me, "Thinkest thou, thou canst live without them?"

Contenance herself . . . a fruitful mother of children of joys . . . smiled on me. . . . "Cast thyself fearlessly upon Him, He will receive and will heal thee. . . . Stop thine ears against those thy unclean members . . . that they may be mortified. . . ." This controversy in my heart was self against self . . .

But when a deep consideration had from the secret bottom of my soul drawn together and heaped up all my misery in the sight of my

Heart, there arose a mighty storm, bringing a shower of tears. . . .

I cast myself down . . . under a certain fig tree, giving full vent to my tears . . . "O Lord, how long? How long? . . . Remember not our former iniquities" for I felt that I was held by them."

So was I speaking, and weeping in the most bitter contrition . . . when I heard . . . a voice . . . chanting . . . "Take up and read; take up and read." . . . I arose; interpreting it to be no other than the command from God . . . .Eagerly . . . I seized, opened [the volume of the Apostle] and in silence read the section on which my eyes first fell: Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, in concupiscence. . . . Instantly . . . a light as it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away.

*The Confessions of St. Augustine*, trs. Edward B. Pusey (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1960), 145-48.

#### *For Reflection and Discussion*

1. Review the "Types of Entries"
2. Identify as many of the "types of entries" as you can in the excerpt from John Wesley's *Journal* and from the excerpt from Augustine's *Confessions* (Resource 13-4).
3. What type of entry dominated Wesley's writing? Augustine's?
4. What did you learn about John Wesley from this brief journal excerpt?
5. What did you learn about Aurelius Augustine from his journal?
6. What would a reader a hundred years from now learn about you if they dug up your journal from this class?
7. Are the concerns of Augustine and Wesley still relevant to us today? Would these same themes appear in journals of contemporary Christians?

# Harvesting Our Spiritual Life Journals

## A Small-Group Exercise

*First Round:* Let each member of your group select one of the following and share his or her response to it.

*Second Round:* Ask each member to select another item and share her or his response. As time permits, go on to rounds three and four.

1. In what ways did the journaling experience deepen your relationship with God?
2. Did writing out your thoughts and experiences help you make any decisions?
3. What needed corrections in your service, discipline, attitudes, and relationships did the journaling experience pinpoint?
4. Did you divide your journal into several sections (spiritual diary, answered prayers, collected prayers and quotations, reflections on sermons, books, or life events)? How did you arrange or organize your journal?
5. What journaling occasions or experiences caused you to rejoice and praise God?
6. If they made a television show based on your journal, what would the title of the program be?
7. Has the journaling experience helped you know yourself better? Has it produced any "I didn't know I was like that" comments or feelings?
8. What Bible verses or quotations from books, poems, lectures or discussions from this class, or sermons have appeared in your journal?
9. What music made its way into your journal? What was its significance?
10. Does your journal record any answers to prayer?
11. Would you recommend journaling as a spiritual discipline for new converts?
12. Has today's discussion given you any new ideas about how to make your future journaling more fruitful?
13. Journaling works better for some than others. How would you rate your recent journaling experience?
  - a. Journaling is something that I will continue to do.
  - b. The experience was valuable and satisfying for me.
  - c. I didn't get much out of it.
  - d. I didn't work very hard at planning and organizing my journal.
  - e. Some things I liked about journaling; some I didn't.

## Checkup and Review Quiz

1. To what extent has this series of learning experiences increased your knowledge of the values and techniques of spiritual journaling?  
A. Greatly                      B. Somewhat                      C. Little
  
2. Do you feel more strongly than ever that spiritual journaling can nourish your own spiritual life?  
A. Definitely                      B. Yes                      C. Not really
  
3. When you signed the Affirmation or pledge to do spiritual journaling even after this class is over what was your attitude?  
A. Gladly                      B. Okay                      C. Are you kidding?
  
4. How would you rate the experience of sharing from each other's journal?  
A. Very helpful                      B. Useful                      C. Wasted time

# Lesson 14: Fasting and the Disciplines of Abstinence

## Due this Lesson

Bible study  
Journaling

## Learner Objectives

To help students

- be able to define and explain the key concepts of the disciplines of abstinence
- embrace and own some of the disciplines of abstinence as valuable for their own Christian life
- be ready to experience some of the disciplines of abstinence and later evaluate and write about their usefulness in their spiritual journey

## Homework Assignments

### Plan a Half-Hour Session of SOLITUDE and SILENCE This Week.

Write a one- to two-page paper on the struggle you had to find the time, the interruptions, your thoughts and feelings about the experience. Do not write during the half-hour period of Solitude and Silence, reflect on it afterwards.

### Journal Prompts:

- Choose one of the disciplines of abstinence to practice this week. Reflect on your choice and your experience in your journal.
- Prepare a paragraph outline of a sermon you might preach on the "Disciplines of Abstinence." State your scripture base, the Theme of the sermon, the objective of the sermon, and the church or other ministry situation and the age-group of the target audience. This is for your journal, not to be handed in separately. If your Base Group is meeting beyond the classroom, share sermon ideas.

## Study Guide

Use this guide to process the content of Resources 14-2 through 14-7.

1. What scriptural support can be found for this discipline?
2. What traditional support can be found for this discipline? That is, what has the church generally taught on this subject?
3. List ideas from observation and experience about the value of this discipline for Christians today.
4. Create a list of three to five guidelines that could usefully serve in your church or ministry situation.

## “Thoughts” on Fasting

Use Resource 14-1 to guide your reflection and discussion of this discipline of abstinence.

1. When you begin to deny the body food or drink (or sex) you will discover how used to being satisfied your body is. Its demand will be insistent, until fasting has become a usual discipline.
2. Fasting reveals how often we use food and drink as “comfort sources” because we lack emotional and spiritual health. Nothing promotes gluttony more than a low self-image, overwork, criticism, or failure in relationships.
3. Fasting will “certainly demonstrate how powerful and clever our body is in getting its own way against our strongest resolves” (Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 166).
4. Fasting is giving up food so we can concentrate on the spiritual, not the physical. Fasting to lose weight or to participate in a hunger strike has little, if any, spiritual value.
5. John Wesley taught that fasting should always have the glory of God as its aim. “We fast to express our sorrow and shame for transgressions; to wait for an increase in purifying grace . . . to add . . . earnestness to our prayers. . . to avert the wrath of God, and to obtain all the . . . promises. . . made. . . in Jesus Christ” (“The Sermon on the Mount, Discourse 7,” Edward H. Sugden, ed., *John Wesley’s Fifty-Three Sermons* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983], 334.)
6. Fasting shows trust in God because the fasting believer finds a source for sustenance beyond food. Our belly is not our god—fasting regularly lets us and our body know that.
7. Fasting is a testimony that we understand that suffering is a part of discipleship.
8. Fasting leads to self-control in other areas of life. Thomas Á Kempis, in *The Imitation of Christ*, wrote, “Refrain from gluttony and thou shalt the more easily restrain all the inclinations of the flesh” (cited by Willard, 167).
9. Prayer needs fasting. “Prayer is the one hand with which we grasp the invisible; fasting, the other, with which we let loose and cast away the visible” (Susan Muto, *Pathways of Spiritual Living*, 77).
10. Bible characters for whom fasting was very important included Moses, Elijah, David, Zechariah, Daniel, Jonah, Joel, Paul, Barnabas, Nehemiah, Isaiah, and Jesus of Nazareth.

NOTES

## “Thoughts” on Chastity

Use Resource 14-1 to guide your reflection and discussion of this discipline of abstinence.

1. To practice the discipline of chastity we “turn away from dwelling upon or engaging in the sexual dimensions of our relationships to others—even our husbands or wives” (Willard, 170).
2. Sex was God’s idea, and as an expression of love between married partners it is good, even sacred.
3. Some mistakenly think that getting married is a license to abandon all sexual self-control.
4. Though sexual union is a very important part of marriage, it cannot carry all the freight. Marriages built on sexual attraction alone soon die.
5. Mutual abstention from sex in marriage can be an aid to the spiritual life (1 Cor 7:5).
6. The amount of human grief and suffering because of misuse of the sexual drive is horrifying. Therefore, “the will of God . . . [is] that each of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor” (1 Thess 4:4, RSV). “Each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in the passion of lust like heathen who do not know God” (1 Thess 4:4, NRSV).
7. One evangelical denomination’s governing body passed a creedal statement noting that it is a violation of Christian propriety and the conscience of the church to treat one’s souse like a pornographic object.
8. Abstaining from sexual thoughts and acts in marriage for a given time allows the Christian couple to live out the truth that physical urges are not to govern us.
9. Mastery over sexual conduct allows us to build friendships in the community of faith without fouling the friendships. Chastity “confirms us in the practice of being very close to people without sexual entanglements” (Willard, 170). Augustine said, “I fouled the springs of friendship with the concupiscence of lust.”
10. Sexuality reaches into the essence of our beings. To deny that is to live a lie. To submit sexuality to the discipline of the Spirit is to be a true disciple. The discipline of chastity calls us to proper life as males and females, refusing to let sex dominate and spoil the spiritual life.

## “Thoughts” on Solitude

Use Resource 14-1 to guide your reflection and discussion of this discipline of abstinence.

1. Jesus repeatedly sought solitude.
2. Solitude as a spiritual discipline is more than just getting away to relax—though that can enhance your spiritual life. Solitude is seeking to be alone in hope that God will soon join you as you commune about the things that really matter.
3. Solitude has risks. You have to look inside. You can't depend on sitcoms and game shows or business meetings or soccer practice to keep your soul distracted.
4. “If you do not find yourself alone, you will not find yourself at all” (Andre Gide).
5. “It is not easy to be solitary unless you are born ruthless. Every solitary repudiates someone,” wrote Jessamyn West in the *Los Angeles Times* (July 24, 1983, part 4, p. 3, cited by Willard, 161). That is, to be alone you almost always have to say no to a spouse, child, friend, or church committee.
6. We need to find solitude because the world in which we live, study, work, and do business is a world that conspires against God and godliness.
7. Solitude is especially important to the novice or rookie Christian.
8. We must scrutinize our schedules and find pockets of solitude—or we must change our lifestyles.
9. “It is in solitude that we discover that being is more important than having, and that we are worth more than the result of our efforts. In solitude we discover that our life is not a possession to be defended, but a gift to be shared” (Henri Nouwen, *Out of Solitude* [Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1974], 20).

## “Thoughts” on Silence

Use Resource 14-1 to guide your reflection and discussion of this discipline of abstinence.

1. Solitude and silence go together, but silence goes beyond solitude. “Silence is the way to make solitude a reality,” wrote Henri Nouwen (cited by Willard, 163).
2. Susan Muto says that we shun silence because it “evokes nameless misgivings, guilt feelings, strange disquieting anxiety” (*Pathways*, 77).
3. “Until you can sing and rejoice and delight in God as misers do in gold and kings in scepters” you will not “hasten to Him who calls you in the silences of your heart” (Thomas Traherne and Thomas Kelly, cited in *Reflecting God*, 146).
4. “Busyness rapes relationships. It substitutes shallow frenzy for deep friendships . . . It feeds the ego, but starves the inner man” (*Herald of Holiness*, Jan. 1998, 25).
5. “Silence is frightening because it strips us as nothing else does, throwing us upon the stark realities of our life. It reminds us of death, which will cut us off from this world and leave only us and God” (Willard, 163).
6. Did you ever notice how hard it is to be silent in the presence of others?
7. Novelist, Faith Baldwin tells of New York visitors to her countryside home being unable to sleep because of the deafening silence.
8. Silence allows us to hear the gentle God whose only Son “will not . . . cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets” (Mt 12:19), but they will hear Him in the silence of their hearts.
9. Silence helps us learn the art of not speaking. Perhaps we then can take time to really listen for a change.
10. We often speak out when we should be quiet because we want others to know how important we are. When we develop a quiet confidence born in silence before God we may have the wisdom, “when others come fishing for reassurance and approval send them to fish in deeper waters for their own inner quiet” (Willard, 165).

## “Thoughts” on Christian Simplicity

Use Resource 14-1 to guide your reflection and discussion of this discipline of abstinence.

1. Frivolous consumption corrupts the soul and conspires against trust in God.
2. Les L. Steele defines Christian simplicity as a “willingness to disentangle ourselves from too many commitments, relieve ourselves of debts and obligations that keep us anxious and burdened” (*On the Way* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990], 93).
3. Christian simplicity is the opposite of the credit-card addiction that says I should have everything now.
4. In frugality we “abstain from using money or goods . . . in ways that merely gratify our desires or our hungers for status, glamour, or luxury” (Willard, 168).
5. For an example of Christian simplicity, see Philippians 4:11-13.
6. Financial debt can cause spiritual bondage.
7. A man who gave \$600 million to charity explained that he could only wear one pair of shoes, only eat one hamburger. So why have millions stacked up? Others needed it more.
8. Conspicuous consumption flaunted before the poor inspires them to disgust or envy.
9. “Simplicity is making the journey of life with just enough baggage” (Charles Warner, *Herald of Holiness*, Jan. 1998, 24).
10. Read Hebrews 13:5 and Deuteronomy 8:13-14.

Notes:

## “Thoughts” on Secrecy

Use Resource 14-1 to guide your reflection and discussion of this discipline of abstinence.

1. Dallas Willard describes the discipline of secrecy as abstaining from making our good deeds and qualities known (*Spirit of the Disciplines*, 172).
2. Self-promotion is important in the business world where artists, writers, actors, and business executives hawk their portfolios and résumés. Whole books are written on just how to promote yourself. But self-promotion in the spiritual realm is a sure sign of sickness or sin.

market. He never told me of his giving. But when I went to the Philippines to teach I kept running into gifts he had quietly bought for the field. A Jeep for the Jesus Film Ministry, a building for a Christian elementary school, a remodeled church, and several others. I had no idea he was quietly giving tens of thousands to missions. The discipline of secrecy. (From *The Christian's Guide to Financial Freedom*, Bill Martin and Wes Tracy, a video course, Nazarene Publishing House, 2000).
3. Several ministers were in a meeting. One mentioned his teaching trip to Russia from which he had just returned. A second man then told about his own educational trip to Russia. The third had to go back to high school days but told of a mission trip of two weeks in Moscow. The fourth man, I knew, had spent a whole year teaching pastors in Russia, but he remained silent. *The discipline of secrecy*, I thought. I almost envied him, because I was one of the three who just had to blab about my wonderful ministry in Russia!
4. A friend of mine recently gave a million dollars to a Christian school to construct a building—a building that will carry another man's name above the door. The discipline of secrecy.
5. Troy Winslow spent 27 years as a missionary to the Philippines. He never made more than \$15,000 in a year—until he retired and then he made a lot of money in the stock
6. How strong is what John Wesley used to call the “thirst for praise.” Only the divinely enabled grace of secrecy can help us overcome that thirst.
7. The practice of the discipline of secrecy helps us develop a relationship with God independent of the opinions of others (Willard, 172-73).
8. Christian figures who are always bragging on themselves, showing off their credentials, and dropping names of the rich and famous are advertising more than their great achievements. They are also hawking their shallowness and their neglect of the grace of secrecy. Put them on your prayer list.
9. Read Philippians 2:3.

*May the Lord make your love increase  
and overflow for each other . . .  
Therefore encourage one another and build each other up,  
just as in fact you are doing.  
1 Thessalonians 3:12; 5:11*

*My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart  
and united in love, so that they may have the full riches . . .  
[and] know the mystery of . . . Christ,  
in whom are hidden all the treasures of  
wisdom and knowledge.  
Colossians 2:2-3*

## *UNIT 4*

# **The Spiritual Disciplines of Community**

- 15. Formative Christian Worship
- 16. The Sacramental Means of Grace
- 17. Companions on the Spiritual Journey
- 18. Faith Mentors and Soul Friends

### Unit 4 Objectives

To help students

- 1. (Cognitive) understand, analyze, apply, and evaluate the essential spiritual disciplines of community
- 2. (Affective) own and embrace their opportunities and responsibilities of wholeheartedly engaging in the nurturing life of the community of faith
- 3. (Psychomotor) change their lives and ministries in ways that bring about actual participation—as recipient and servant—in the community disciplines

## Lesson 15: Formative Christian Worship

### Due this Lesson

Reflection paper  
Journaling

### Learner Objectives

To help students

- understand some of the biblical and historical foundations for basic practices in Christian worship
- appreciate and embrace the tradition, nature, and practicality of the basic elements of Christian worship
- be able to plan and lead worship experiences for the people of God that nourish the deeper spiritual life

### Homework Assignments

#### Choose one of these two assignments

- The Qualifications of a Worship Leader.

Based on Robert Weber, *Worship Leader Magazine*, and an article by Wes Tracy, *Herald of Holiness* (June 1994, 41) we came up with this "job description" list for a worship leader. Write a paper of up to three double-spaced pages about this job description following these three steps:

1. Rank these in order of importance according to your best judgment.
2. Defend and explain your top five rankings
3. What is your greatest weakness as a worship leader? Your best strength?

Job description:

- A working knowledge of Old Testament worship
- A working knowledge of New Testament and Early Church worship
- Know something of the development and history of Christian worship
- Have a good reputation as a spiritual person among the members of the congregation
- The ability to lead—that is, to get others to follow him or her
- Know something of the theology of worship
- Know something of the history of the use of music in worship
- Know something of the arts as they relate to worship
- Know something of how worship relates to other ministries such as evangelism, social concern, Christian education, etc.

#### Plan a Service of Formative Worship

Plan a service of worship for your church or ministry situation, keeping in mind the following

- The purpose of worship is to glorify God.
- The elements of worship should emphasize the Trinity.
- The essential elements of classical Christian worship.

- The needs of people who will likely be in the congregation.
- The service should be “formative.” That is, it should help people grow spiritually.

Make out the order of service in detail. Include objective and subjective, directive, and spontaneous elements. Cite the sermon text and theme.

**Journal Prompts:**

- Cite some worship practice that seems to help others but leaves you cold and empty. Prayerfully explore the uses and aim of that worship practice as well as why it doesn’t touch you.
- Carry on a written conversation with yourself probing this quotation:

“People argue about worship because they are talking about the most important thing in the universe—how to reach God. No wonder they have strong opinions. But once you understand the nature and history of some worship practice that is different from your own you no longer fear or fight it” (Noble Hansen).

## Old Testament Worship

Work together in pairs or triads on this investigation of a biblical worship event. The lines of the Scripture passage are numbered on the left. Then in the space to the left of various elements of worship listed below this passage write the number(s) of the line(s) where you can find that element in the passage.

### Exodus 24:1-8

1. Then he said to Moses, "Come up to the Lord, you and
2. Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel.
3. You are to worship at a distance, but Moses alone is to
4. approach the Lord; the others must not come near. And the
5. people may not come up with him
6. When Moses went and told the people all the Lord's words
7. and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything the
8. Lord has said we will do." Moses then wrote down everything
9. that the Lord had said.
10. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the
11. foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars
12. representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young
13. Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and
14. sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord.
15. Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the
16. other half he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book
17. of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded,
18. "We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey."
19. Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and
20. said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has
21. made with you in accordance with all these words" (NIV).

### Elements of Biblical Worship

- \_\_\_\_\_ God initiates it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rooted in an event.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Covenantal in nature.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Happens at appointed times and places.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Calls for a response from the people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Includes celebration.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ratification by a sacrifice or ratifying or *sealing* meal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ritual acts of remembrance and renewal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reading and proclamation of the Word of God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sign-acts or symbols.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A divine-human encounter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The people pledge to go forth and obey.

## Hints About Worship in the New Testament

New Testament worship used Old Testament ceremonies, but reinterpreted them as having been fulfilled in Christ.

New Testament worship was Christ-centered from beginning to end.

New Testament worship included singing of psalms and hymns.

New Testament worship included “blessings” and doxologies.

New Testament worship included baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

New Testament worship included preaching.

New Testament worship affirmed orthodox belief through creeds and confessions of faith.

## Early Christian Worship

**The earliest “order of service that we have is from Justin Martyr, about AD 150.** Working in pairs or triads, read aloud Justin Martyr’s description of worship in the Early Church. Then drawing on this description respond to the questions that follow the quotation.

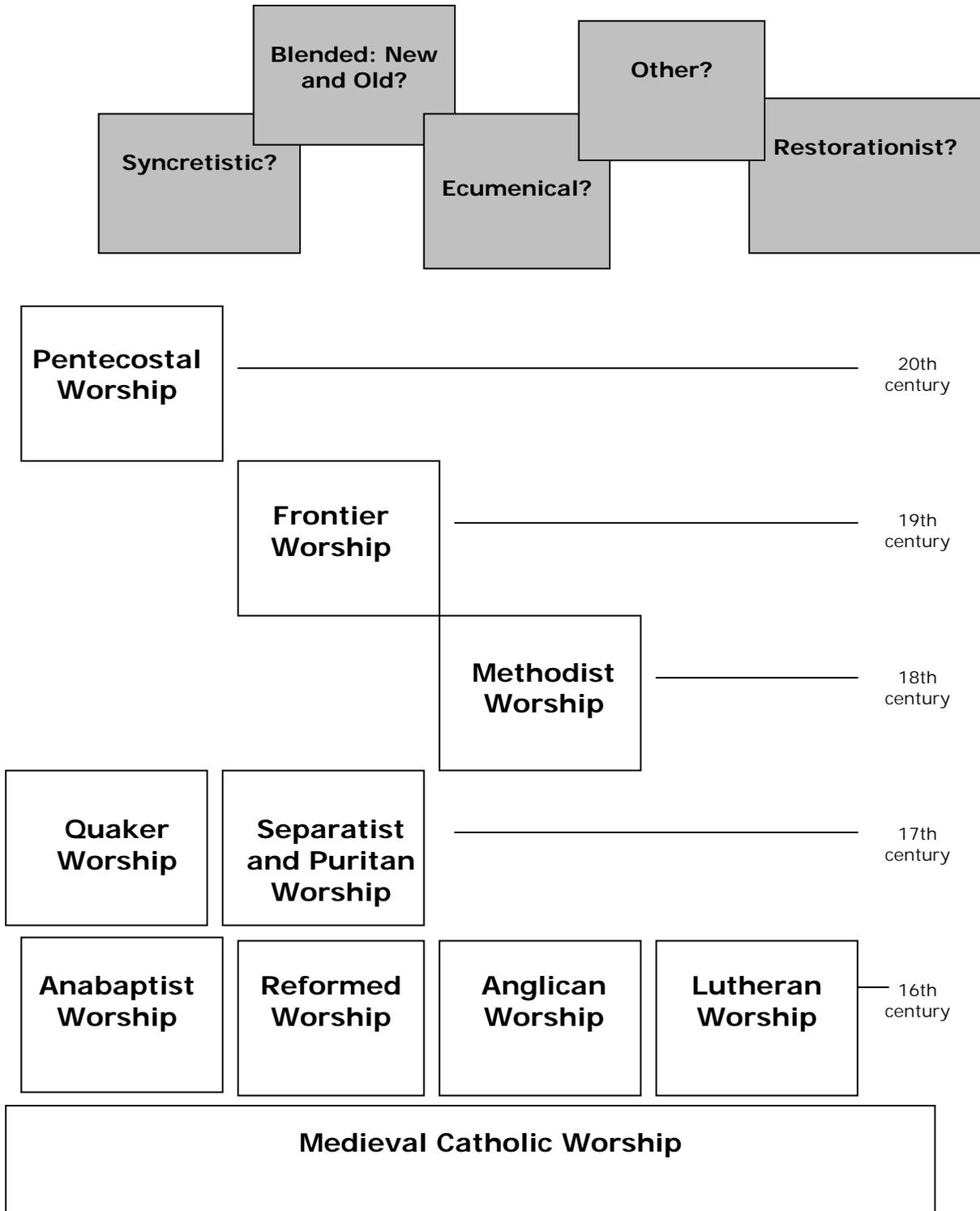
“And on the day called Sunday there is a meeting in one place of those who live in cities or in the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. When the reader has finished, the president in a discourse urges and invites [us] to the imitation of these noble things. Then we all stand up together and offer prayers. . . . When we have finished the prayer, bread is brought and wine and water, and the president similarly sends up prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his ability, and the congregation assents, saying the Amen. The distribution, and the reception of consecrated [elements] by each one takes place and they are sent to the absent by the deacons.”

### What does this passage tell us

1. about the place or location of worship?
2. about the time of worship?
3. about the leader of worship?
4. about the posture and use of prayer in worship?
5. about the Lord’s Supper, its structure, meaning, and significance?
6. about the place of Scripture in worship?
7. about the practice and nature of preaching in worship?
8. about participation and response of the people?
9. About the role of music in worship?

# The Development of Protestant Worship

As presented in *Protestant Worship*, by James F. White



Wes Tracy, Dec. 1997

# Methodist Worship

## Listening Team Guide

The task of the Listening Team is to take careful notes on the lecture and at the time for discussion CLARIFY, AMPLIFY, and raise QUESTIONS in behalf of the class. Besides the lecture, look closely at Resource 15-4.

### 1. Origins and Nature of 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Methodist Worship

Listen for such things as mission, use of preaching, teaching, music, sacraments, etc.

### 2. Nineteenth-Century Developments in Methodist Worship

### 3. Twentieth-Century Methodist Worship

| For Clarification | For Amplification | Questions |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|
|                   |                   |           |

# Frontier Worship

## Listening Team Guide

The task of the Listening Team is to take careful notes on the lecture and at the time for discussion CLARIFY, AMPLIFY, and raise QUESTIONS in behalf of the class. Besides the lecture, look closely at Resource 15-4.

### 1. Foundations of Frontier Worship, 19th Century

### 2. Practices of Frontier Worship

- A. Sacraments
- B. Preaching
- C. Music
- D. Prayer
- E. Order of Service
- F. Service
- G. The Church Year
- H. Confirmation
- I. Worship Space

| For Clarification | For Amplification | Questions |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|
|                   |                   |           |

# Pentecostal or Contemporary Worship

## Listening Team Guide

The task of the Listening Team is to take careful notes on the lecture and at the time for discussion CLARIFY, AMPLIFY, and raise QUESTIONS in behalf of the class. Besides the lecture, look closely at Resource 15-4.

### 1. Foundations of Pentecostal Worship, 20th Century

### 2. Practices of Pentecostal or Contemporary Worship

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| A. Sacraments       | F. Healing         |
| B. Liturgy          | G. The Church Year |
| C. Music            | H. Confirmation    |
| D. Prayer           | I. Worship Space   |
| E. Tone and Texture | J. Preaching       |

| For Clarification | For Amplification | Questions |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|
|                   |                   |           |

## Lesson 16: The Sacramental Means of Grace

### Due this Lesson

Choose an assignment  
Journaling

### Learner Objectives

To help students

- be able to define and teach the biblical, historical, and practical aspects of the sacraments of Christian baptism and the Lord's Supper
- own and embrace the sacraments as means of grace for God's people and for themselves
- incorporate the practice of the sacraments in their own spiritual lives
- plan and lead services that feature formative observances of the sacraments of initiation and sanctification

### Homework Assignments

#### Planning a Service for Renewal of Baptismal Vows

Prepare a worship service that features the renewal of baptismal vows. Plan the acts of assembly, the music, public reading of the Scripture, appropriate prayers, an offering, and the sermon title, text, and theme. A ceremony of affirmations and vows is also to be created. Include any items from this lesson's lecture that you desire (white robes, anointing with oil, meal of milk and honey, crowns of leaves, communion service). The Renewal Ceremony is shown below.

#### The Renewal Ceremony

##### 1. The Affirmations of Faith

Our spiritual ancestors in the Early Church were immersed in or poured with water three times in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. They were then to give a triple affirmation of faith in the Holy Trinity. Let us follow their example responding with the words of the Nicene Creed (*Worship in Song*, number 14).

(With those wishing to renew their baptismal vows standing at the altar or other designated part of the worship scene, let the minister ask:)

Minister: *Do you believe in God the Father?*

Renewing Believers: I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

Minister: *Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?*

Renewing Believers: I believe. . .in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

Minister: *Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?*

Renewing Believers: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

**2. The Renewal Vows** (taken from Hale, *The Church Rituals Handbook*, Beacon Hill Press, 1997, 16-19. Used by permission.)

Minister: *On behalf of Christ and the Church, I ask you: Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?*

Response: I renounce them.

Minister: *Do you renounce the evil powers of this world that corrupt and that destroy the creatures of God?*

Response: I renounce them.

Minister: *Do you renounce sinful desires that draw you away from the love of God?*

Response: I renounce them.

Minister: *Have you repented of your sins, turned to Christ, and accepted Him as your Savior?*

Response: I have.

Minister: *Have you put your whole trust in His grace alone for your redemption?*

Response: I have.

Minister: *Do you promise to follow and obey Him as your redeeming Lord?*

Response: I do.

Minister: *Will you earnestly seek to purify yourself from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for Christ?*

Response: I will, with God's help.

Minister: *Will you serve the present age, fulfilling in your life and ministry the call of Christ to make disciples of all nations?*

Response: I will, with God's help.

### **Journal Prompt**

Respond to this as a way of preparing for the next lesson on face-to-face groups: "We are, each of us, an angels with only one wing, and we can only fly by embracing each other" (Luciano de Crescenzo).

## **FAQs**

### **Frequently Asked Questions About Baptism**

Take careful notes as your learning leader gives answers to these FAQs.

FAQ-1. Why is baptism called the sacrament of initiation?

FAQ-2. What does the New Testament say about baptism?

FAQ-3. What does the Church of the Nazarene say about baptism?

FAQ-4. What theological affirmations are made about Christian baptism?

FAQ-5. Does getting baptized save you?

FAQ-6. How seriously did the Early Church take baptism?

FAQ-7. What do we know about the actual baptism ceremony in the Early Church?

FAQ-8. What about infant baptism and baby dedication?

FAQ-9. Should a person ever be rebaptized?

FAQ-10. Where do I find ceremonies and rituals for baptismal services?

## The Lord's Supper: A Bible Study

Study Luke 22:7-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:14-22 and 11:17-33.

Use this guide to organize and interpret what you read.

### What verse(s) indicate that:

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Jesus himself started this tradition?
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. We are commanded to keep this sacrament in memory of Jesus?
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. The Lord's Supper points to the Second Coming?
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. There is danger of betrayal even at the table of the Lord?
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. We should examine our hearts before taking Communion?
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. The privilege of the Lord's Supper can be abused and cheapened?
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. Holy Communion commemorates and renews the "new covenant" in Jesus' blood?
- \_\_\_\_\_ h. Prayers of thanksgiving should be a part of Communion?
- \_\_\_\_\_ i. Holy Communion is the Christian's Passover?
- \_\_\_\_\_ j. All Christians are one body?
- \_\_\_\_\_ k. The Communion cup is a cup of blessing that we bless?
- \_\_\_\_\_ l. The bread and wine stand for the body and blood of Christ Jesus?

# The Significance of the Lord's Supper

## What are you saying when you receive Holy Communion?

1. You publicly identify yourself with Christ and His people.
2. You affirm your faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
3. You demonstrate your belief in salvation by grace, for no one is worthy to kneel at the Lord's table on his or her own merits.
4. You repent of any known sins, for one cannot bring unconfessed sins to the table of the Lord.
5. You seek purification, holiness, sanctification.
6. Your action says that you are ready to encounter God in soul-shaking dimensions.
7. You memorialize or commemorate the suffering of Jesus Christ on your behalf.
8. You reenact the sacrifice of Christ and commit yourself to share in His sufferings on behalf of the lost for whom He died.
9. You renew the covenant with Christ.
10. You declare your hope in the return of Jesus Christ.
11. You assert your faith in the resurrection of Jesus and in your own resurrection (Rom 8:11).
12. You express your commitment to the unity of the church, and your willingness to reach out in love and forbearance to the family of faith.
13. By participating in the Lord's Supper you are nourished by the Bread of Life and the Blood of the Lamb.
14. You give thanks to God.
15. You acknowledge the true presence of the historical Christ.
16. You participate in a celebration of joy and Christ's victory.

## Thoughts on the Eucharist

Consider the quotations about the Lord's Supper given below. Write the number (or numbers) of the affirmation(s) in Resource 16-3 that each quote reinforces, amplifies, or clarifies.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. "In the Supper our Lord is present. The Christ of Calvary, risen and ascended, sits with us in the Supper" (J. Kenneth Grider, *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*, 519).
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. "Of thy sacramental feast this day, O Son of God, accept me as a partaker. . . . I will not give thee a kiss like Judas" (*The Liturgy of St. Basil*).
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. "The question is not. 'Am I good enough to take communion?' Rather it is, 'Am I willing to give my whole life in self-oblivious sacrifice in the name of Jesus?'" (Evelyn Underhill, *The Mystery of Sacrifice* [Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Pub., 1991], 51).
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. "As our bodies are strengthened by bread and wine, so are our souls by these tokens of the body and the blood of Christ. . . . This gives strength to perform our duty and leads us on to perfection" (John Wesley, *Works*, 7:148).
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. "As this piece [of bread] was scattered over the hills and then brought together and made one, so let your Church be brought together from the ends of the earth into your Kingdom" (*The Didache*).
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. The Lord's Supper is "the sacrament of memory" (William Barclay).
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. "The Church is the Body of Christ, the organ of His eternal self-offering . . . each of her members accepts a sacrificial status, is willing to give all for the world's need." In the Lord's supper, the believer "is stretching out the arms upon the cross . . . that they may embrace the whole world" (Underhill, *The Mystery of Sacrifice*, 29).
- \_\_\_\_\_ h. "Our minds leap forward, too, in the Supper. We are to rehope at this time for the second coming of Christ to finalize our redemption" (Grider, 510).
- \_\_\_\_\_ i. In the Eucharist it may be that "the soul is led into the very recesses of the Godhead, and by love made visible is snatched up to the Invisible Love" (Underhill, 5).
- \_\_\_\_\_ j. "Consume the thorns of my offenses. Make clean my soul, make holy my mind" (Underhill, *The Greek Heiratikon*, 74).
- \_\_\_\_\_ k. "It approaches the ridiculous to exclude fellow believers from Communion. . . . It is unfortunate, if not ridiculous, in a local church setting, when a visiting Christian is prohibited from receiving Communion . . . !" (Grider, 508).
- \_\_\_\_\_ l. "This meal need not be special, nor exhilaratingly meaningful (though sometimes it is both). This is the normal food of Christians. . . . We return again and again to the Lord's table . . . as habitually . . . as we gather at the breakfast table" (William Willimon, *The Service of God*, [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983], 127).
- \_\_\_\_\_ m. "The Eucharist was not a solemn, mournful occasion, but a festive one . . . [with] the presence of Christ as the host of a present celebration" (Rob Staples, *Outward Sign and Inward Grace*, 229, 245).
- \_\_\_\_\_ n. "In my hand no price I bring; / Simply to thy cross I cling" (Augustus Toplady).

# Lesson 17: Companions on the Spiritual Journey

## Due this Lesson

Service plan  
Journaling

## Learner Objectives

To help students

- understand the insightful and practical use of face-to-face groups in the Wesleyan tradition
- own their own need for the encouragement, strengthening, accountability, and growth that comes from face-to-face Christian groups
- experience the small-group process and devise ministry strategies employing face-to-face groups as one necessary way the community of faith nurtures the deeper spiritual life

## Homework Assignments

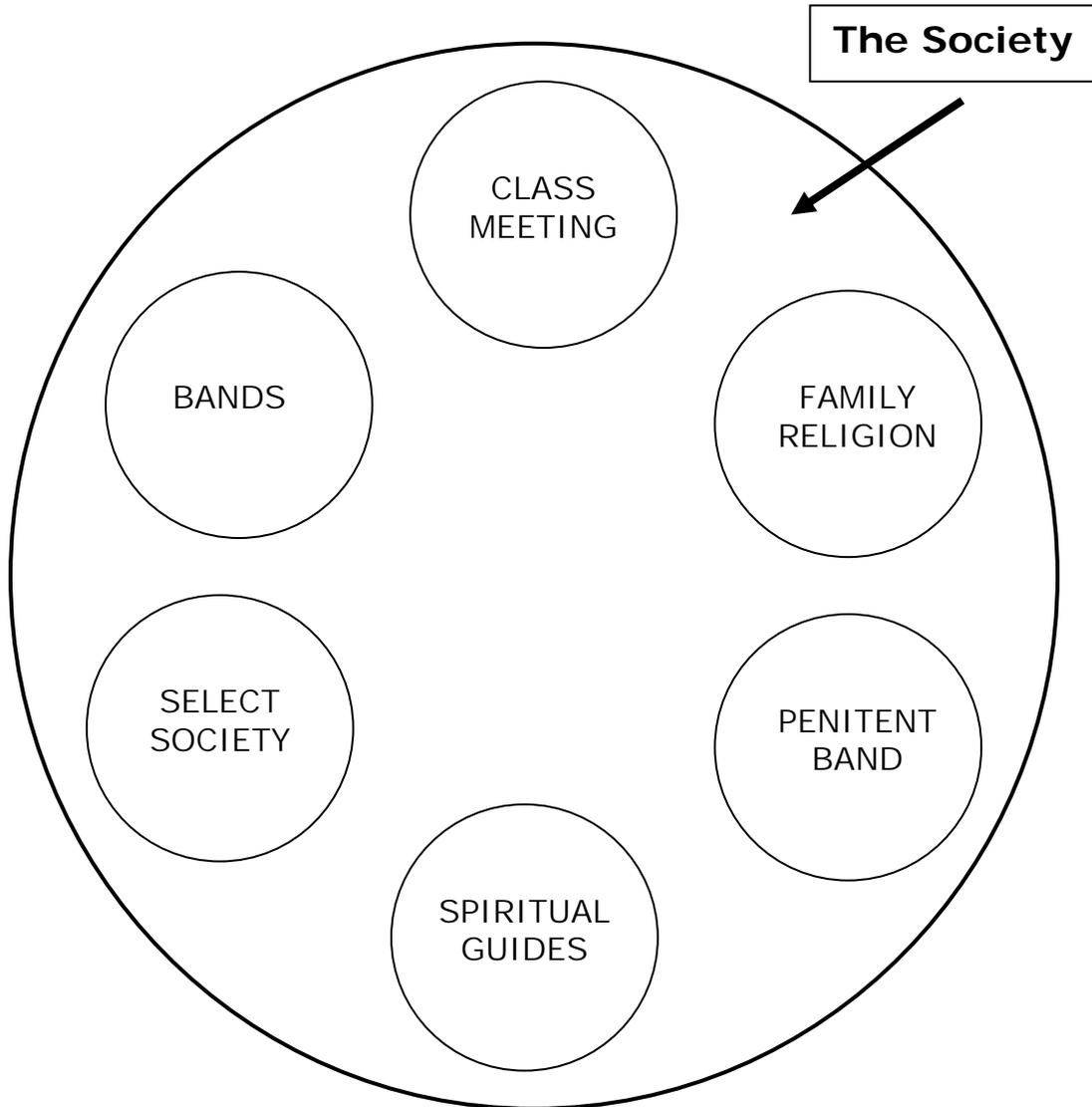
### Face-to-face groups

Next class time each student is to submit a two- to three-page typewritten plan to start a face-to-face group ministry involving three or more persons. It can focus on instruction and fellowship (like the Class Meeting), on covenant groups (like the Band Meeting), or a support group, a leadership group, or a program of family worship. The “plan” should include the specific plans for the first meeting of the group.

### Journal Prompts

- One thing that scares me about face-to-face groups is . . .
- Two persons I would like to work with in a small group are . . .
- Three things I could get out of an ongoing face-to-face group are . . .

## John Wesley's Structures for Spiritual Formation



## Covenant Group Questions

Try out these questions based on the original Band Meeting questions used by the early Wesleyans.

Each band member, starting with the leader, shared answers to these questions.

1. What spiritual failures have you experienced since our last meeting? What known sins, if any, have you committed?
2. What temptations have you battled with this week? Where do you feel the most vulnerable right now?
3. What temptations have you been delivered from this week? Please share with us how you won the victory.
4. Has the Lord revealed anything to you about your heart and life that makes you want us to join you in taking a second look at what might be sinful attitudes, lifestyle, or motivations?
5. Is there any spiritual problem that you have never been able to talk about—to us or even to God?

(See Wesley Tracy, *Reflecting God*, 133.)

Discussion Guide for  
**Wesleyan Face-to-face Groups**

1. What face-to-face group encounter that you have experienced in the past year mirrors one of the early Wesleyan groups?
2. What groups in our church or ministry setting (if any) mirror the early Wesleyan groups? Which ones?
3. New converts today need what kind of face-to-face group?
4. When it comes to nurture through community, what our church does best is . . .
5. The sense of belonging at my church would be improved if I, for one, would . . .
6. If I were to join or start a modern version of a Wesleyan face-to-face group, it would be . . .
7. If you were to start a covenant group something like Wesley's bands, around what would you organize it in your church or ministry setting right now?
  - A. Bible study
  - B. Pursuit of holiness
  - C. Cancer survivors' group
  - D. Church leadership
  - E. Prayer group
  - F. Spiritual fellowship
  - G. Divorce recovery
  - H. Doctrinal study
  - I. Other \_\_\_\_\_
8. If you were to organize a group that you selected in No. 7 above, what would the appropriate first steps be (permissions, ownership, scheduling, curriculum, group leader, etc.)?

# A Wesleyan Service of Family Worship

## Step 1. Opening Prayer

Use both extemporary prayer and these words from Wesley's family prayers for Sunday: *"Almighty and eternal God, we desire to praise thy holy name. . . . How great was thy love to the sinful sons of men! . . . Compose our spirits to a quiet and steady dependence on thy good providence"* (John Wesley's *Prayers*, ed. Frederick C. Gill [New York: Abingdon, 1951], 59, 63).

## Step 2. Psalm Singing

If psalm singing is too much for your family or group, select a hymn or gospel song rich in devotional content and sing it. If you like the challenge of psalm singing, try this excerpt from Psalm 103:13-14, 17-18, NKJV:

*As a father pities his children,  
So the Lord pities them who fear Him.  
For He knows our frame;  
He remembers that we are dust.*

*The mercy of the Lord is  
From everlasting to everlasting . . .  
To such as keep His covenant,  
To those who remember His commandments.*

## Step 3. Bible Study

- A. Select a passage for study, or use Psalm 103.
- B. Parents are to explain the passage. Concentrate on the timeless principles. Putting the Scriptures on the child's level usually requires advance study by the parent(s). Remember that children deal best with the concrete. Use examples from everyday life.
- C. Children are then to explain the passage back to the parents. Thus the parents have the opportunity and responsibility to guide the child to proper understanding of the Word.

## Step 4. Prayer

Begin by reading one of these prayers used by Wesley. Explain the prayer. Mere recital of words that we do not quite understand does not help us much. If there are very young children in your family worship replace these following prayers with much more simple ones. After the written prayer, voice a prayer in your own words.

- A. *Almighty God, to whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen* (Book of Common Prayer).
- B. *O Lord, increase in us faith and devotion; give us humility and propriety, patience in adversity, and continual joy in the Holy Spirit. Give us modesty in our countenance, composure in our behavior, wisdom in our speech, holiness in our actions. Let thy mercy cleanse us from all our sins, and confirm us in all righteousness* (quoted by Steven J. Harper, "The Devotional Life of John Wesley 1703-1725," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1981, 2:258).

## Step 5. Sing the Doxology Together

## Step 6. The Benediction

A parent gives a benediction of their own, or a Bible verse or this benediction of Wesley:

*Pardon, O gracious Jesus, what we have been,  
With all thy holy discipline correct what we are.  
Order by thy providence what we shall be,  
And in the end crown all thy gifts. Amen* (*Prayers*, Gill, 103).

## Step 7. The Blessing

Each child shall say, "Father (Mother) bless me in Jesus' name."

Parental response (never to be refused) \_\_\_\_\_(name)\_\_\_\_\_ I bless you in the name of Jesus who loves you and gave His life for you. May His forgiveness, grace, and peace be yours this day/night, and every day of your life.

This service is adapted from *The Upward Call* (197-99) and used by permission of Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City.

# Lesson 18: Faith Mentors and Soul Friends

## Due this Lesson

Face-to-face group plan  
Journaling

## Learner Objectives

To help students

- understand the roles and function of faith mentors and soul friends, relating them to Scripture and the Wesleyan heritage
- review with appreciation the times that faith mentors and spiritual friends have helped them, and look at their own life situation with a discerning eye for mentoring and “twin soul” ministry opportunities
- purposely thank their own mentors, and establish mentoring or soul friend relationships in their own lives

## Homework Assignments

### Letter to a Mentor

Think of someone who served you as a mentor—spiritual, vocational or personal—and write a letter of thanks, even if you have “outgrown” that person and his or her ideas now.

### Conversation Report

Before the next class setup informal conversations with at least two different people about faith mentors and soul friends. Record the responses, feelings, insights that came up. Did the conversations take any surprising turns? What never came up that you expected to be discussed? Write a one- to three-page typewritten report.

### Journal Prompt

Write a prayer dialogue between you the Lord about this matter of faith mentoring and twin-souls ministry.

## One-on-One Relationships

**Faith mentoring** is the ministry of an experienced, mature, established Christian to a new convert, a young Christian, or even a not-yet-saved person. It is the spiritual equivalent of a journeyman-apprentice relationship. John Wesley called them “spiritual fathers” and “nursing mothers.”

**Twin souls** is the term Wesley used to describe two mature spiritual friends who meet with each other regularly as equals giving to each other support, accountability, discerning insight, concerned counsel, and love as they serve as God’s usher to one another.

# Faith Mentoring Roles

As your learning leader presents the eight roles of faith mentors, take notes in the space provided and prepare for the discussion that will follow the lecture.

**1. Coach**

**6. Midwife of the Soul**

**2. Model**

**7. Advocate**

**3. Gift-giver**

**8. Guarantor**

**4. Map-maker**

**5. Sponsor**

## For Discussion

1. Which of the foregoing roles of faith mentors has someone served for you? Who has been your coach, guarantor, advocate, model, etc.? Be specific. Be prepared to share.
2. Which of the foregoing faith mentor roles have you served for someone else? Be specific. Be prepared to share.
3. Can you think of someone in your present ministry situation that needs a faith mentor? What roles would a faith mentor need to serve for him or her right now?

## The Faith Mentor's Pledge

1. I will spend the time it takes to build an intensely bonded relationship with the person I am mentoring.
2. I commit myself to the task of visualizing and articulating the possibilities and potential of the person I am mentoring.
3. I will be honest, yet affirming, in confronting the errors, faults, prejudices, and immaturities of the person I am mentoring.
4. I will be verbal and transparent before the mentee. I will share my own failures and brokenness, my strengths and successes as part of a relationship of integrity.
5. I commit myself to stand by the learner through trials and hardships—even if these are invoked or self-inflicted by the mentee's ignorance, error, or mistakes.
6. I will help the person I mentor set spiritual and life goals and share his or her dreams.
7. I will help the mentee objectively evaluate progress toward his or her goals.
8. I commit myself to living out everything I teach.
9. I am willing not only to teach but also to be taught by the mentee as the Spirit directs.
10. I will let the mentee go when the time comes, wishing him or her the best in taking the next step. I will not try to reproduce myself in the mentee, but help him or her become the person God had in mind when He created this person.

### For Discussion

1. What keeps most Christians from making the commitments required of faith mentors?
2. Do you think that faith mentoring should be a same-gender relationship? Why?
3. What needs to be added [or subtracted] from the Faith Mentor's Pledge?

## Thoughts on Spiritual Friendship

1. Soul friends help each other achieve extension *animi ad magna*, the “stretching of the soul to great things.”
2. “No mind is so good that it does not need another mind to counter and equal it, and to save it from deceit and bigotry and folly” (cited without reference by Sellnor, *Mentoring*, 155-56).
3. A soul friend can listen and know what it feels like to be that person, what forces propel him or her, what holds the person back, what calls him or her forward.
4. Twin soul arrangements seem to “happen” more than they are planned or programmed. Perhaps they cannot be programmed at all.
5. Pastors and church leaders should let people know that they don’t have to be singing in the choir, teaching a class, or heading the Building and Grounds Committee to be doing the work of God. Praying and counseling with a mentee or soul friend is also doing the work of God and the Church.
6. Though most twin soul relationships more or less just happen in the providence of God, faith mentoring and spiritual friendship can become more “on purpose” than in the past.
7. Soul friends serve as mirrors for each other. They provide a different view of the self. They see each other in different ways and help each other see potential for growth and service.
8. Though spiritual friends share the spiritual life “without reserve and without disguise,” to use Wesley’s words, that does not mean that they share every detail of job, marriage, finances, etc. Family and financial matters may come up in prayer requests, answered prayer praises, and the like, but the focus is on helping each other live the deeper spiritual life.
9. A sacred accountability is shared between soul friends. They hold each other to high standards, even if it means challenging irrational, unspiritual, or prejudicial attitudes and behaviors.
10. The single stone that marks the graves of poet Robert Frost and his wife in Bennington, VT are inscribed with the words, “Wing to wing and oar to oar.” Every Christian needs a spiritual companion wing to wing and oar to oar.
11. Old Chinese Proverb: If you are planting for a year, plant grain. If you are planting for a decade, plant trees. If you are planting for a century, plant people.

### For Discussion

Think about someone who has served as a mentor or as a spiritual friend. If you were to write them a letter of thanks today, what would you say?

John Wesley taught that one cannot make the Christian journey without spiritual friends and companions on the way. In one place he said one would be crazy to try to live the spiritual life alone. What is your opinion?

## What Kind of Person Makes a Good Faith Mentor or Spiritual Friend?

1. A well-established Christian, not a novice or a new convert.
2. A person with a good reputation and strong character.
3. A person who knows the Scriptures.
4. A man or woman who is both loving and learned. Competent in theology and human relationships.
5. Someone who knows the history of the Christian faith and prizes its treasures.
6. A man or woman known for personal holiness.
7. A person possessed and led by the Holy Spirit.
8. A man or woman who has the gift of discerning the movements of the Spirit.
9. A person who embodies the grace of God.
10. A person who practices frankness and honesty.
11. A person who listens and shows tender respect.
12. A man or woman with the gift of patience.
13. A person of peace and tranquillity and free from greed.
14. A person who prefers God over things.
15. A man or woman who practices self-giving love, openness and vulnerability in relationships.
16. A person who knows forgiveness and is forgiving.
17. A person of experience in life and in prayer.
18. A person who loves the poor.
19. \_\_\_\_\_
20. \_\_\_\_\_

### For Discussion

1. As you read over the list of qualities above, open your heart to see faces and names. For example, when you read, "A man or woman known for personal holiness" or "A person who knows the Scriptures" who comes to mind? Match at least four persons and qualities.
2. If you were called upon to be a soul friend, which of the foregoing qualities would those who know you say you have? Which ones would you say you most sorely lack?

*Christ's love compels us,  
because we are convinced . . .  
that those who live [in Christ]  
should no longer live for themselves.*  
2 Corinthians 5: 14-15

## **UNIT 5**

# **THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES OF SERVICE**

19. The Spiritual Disciplines of Service

20. Wesleyan-Holiness Spirituality: An Overview

### Unit 5 Objectives

To help students

1. (Cognitive) build an awareness and develop an evaluative level of understanding that Christian service is a spiritual discipline as basic as prayer or Bible study
4. (Affective) make acceptance of service as a spiritual discipline a "second nature" owned and internalized
5. (Psychomotor) engage in Christian service with renewed vigor and with insight that it builds spiritual muscle as well as offering service to Christ and helping people

# Lesson 19: The Spiritual Disciplines of Service

## Due this Lesson

Letter to a mentor  
Conversation report  
Journaling

## Learner Objectives

To help students

- build an awareness and develop an evaluative level of understanding that Christian service is a spiritual discipline as basic as prayer or Bible study
- make acceptance of service as a spiritual discipline a “second nature” owned and internalized
- engage in Christian service with renewed vigor and with insight that it builds spiritual muscle as well as offering service to Christ and helping people

## Homework Assignments

### Jigsaw Activities

Complete any activities from the Jigsaw Group Activities in this lesson that were not covered in class.

### Your Network

Begin to develop evangelism as a discipline of service today. Refer to Resource 19-6 and complete the list of people in your network that you can minister to.

### Journal Prompts

- Write in your journal a list of five one-word descriptors of your teaching in the past. In what ways would you like to see improvement. Again, list five one-word descriptors that state what your aim is in regard to formative Christian teaching.
- One of the benefits of the spiritual discipline of preaching comes right back to the preacher himself or herself. As a pastor you have to preach every few days. That keeps you on your knees before God, asking His direction, forgiveness, and cleansing. The duty of preaching alone can keep one walking closer to God. In your journal write about a time when your prayer and self-examination in preparation for a sermon (or other religious presentation) resulted in your own spiritual progress.
- It is easy when studying Christian service to get quite glum about the things we haven't done. But in your journal, record and thank God for the things He has helped you to actually do. Then, be open to the Lord's leading about what He wants you to do next in the way of serving those for whom Jesus suffered and rose again so they could find salvation.

### Journal Check

Be prepared to show your journal to the learning leader, next session. The learning leader will not read it for detail. The journal will not be handed in, but it will be briefly inspected to note regularity and quality of entries, organization, etc.

# Jesus' First Day at School

## Would He learn anything that would stick with Him?

On Jesus' fifth birthday Mary got the little boy up early, before dawn. After a bath, she dressed Him in a simple scholar's robe with blue fringes. Today would be the first day of school for the blessed boy. While it was still dark Joseph led the boy to school. It was a two-mile walk. We think we know where the synagogue school that the young Jesus attended was. It was on the outskirts of Nazareth.

In those days you did not wait until school began in September. When your fifth birthday came you started to school. The ritual for the first day is well known. And we suppose that Jesus had the same experiences that every other Jewish boy did.

The first stop on Jesus' first day of school was at the reading desk. We know what they read for the Bible lesson of the day because it was always the same when a new student enrolled. The scroll of the Torah was opened to Exodus 20, the Ten Commandments. And the Torah came first—ahead of greeting your playmates or even the teacher. So as Jesus followed along, the Ten Commandments were read with great reverence.

At age five Jesus could already read. Doubtless He could recite the Ten Commandments because Mary and Joseph had instructed Him in the Scriptures since before He was three. It was the same in every Jewish family where God and the Torah were taken seriously.

After the reading of the heart of the Law, the Torah, young Jesus was taken to the house of the teacher who usually lived next door. Meeting the teacher was a big moment. The teacher greeted Jesus just like he greeted every new student. He knelt on one knee, lowering himself to the little boy's level. Then he "welcomed his new student by enfolding him in his arms." Did you get that? The first duty of the teacher was to bend down to the child's level and *hug* the new student the first time he met him.

If that teacher had known who it was that he hugged that day . . . ! Teachers, you never know. I hope that teacher wasn't saying to himself, "Just what I need another five-year-old to take care of. And the carpenter's kid at that. I wish we could get a higher class of student in this district."

### Eating the Book

Later in the morning the teacher presented Jesus with a slate tablet. On it, in abbreviated form, were written the Ten Commandments in chalk. The letters of the Hebrew alphabet were also written on it. At the bottom there was one sentence: "The Law shall be my calling."

It was the same for every new student. When he grew up his vocation might be farmer, shoemaker, baker, priest, chariot mechanic, or camel driver—but whatever his vocation, his *calling* was the Law, the Scriptures! "The Law will be my calling," the slate said. The teacher helped Jesus read the commandments, and then had Him repeat, "The Law will be my calling."

All the schoolboys watched. They knew what was coming next. They knew the new student would have to "eat the book." They had all done it. Sure enough, the teacher brings out an earthenware jar. It is filled with honey. Carefully the teacher pours the honey on Jesus' chalk-written slate. Carefully he spreads the honey over all the commandments and the sentence written on the slate: "The Law shall be my calling." Then, he hands the slate to the five-year-old Jesus and says, "Now, my son, eat the book."

Jesus knows what to do. Joseph has told him all about this ceremony at home many times. Jesus is ready. All eyes are upon Him. Carefully the boy begins to lick the honey off the slate. The honey, along with the chalk-written words, comes off the slate on His tongue. No snickers. No one laughs. This is serious business. As Jesus licks the slate clean, the teacher solemnly says to Him, "May the Law of the Lord be sweet as honey to you as long as you live."

You remember, don't you, that both Ezekiel and John the Revelator wrote something like, *And I ate the book, and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey*. They were both recalling the experience of their first day of school, and, of course, every Jewish reader of their words knew exactly what they were talking about.

### **Sweet Cakes and Prayer**

Still later in the day, probably about noon, just before the school day was over—it was so hot there that school ran from dawn until noon—another special event awaited the young Jesus. It was the ceremony of the sweet cakes. The teacher brought out an expensive dessert made of nuts, raisins, figs or dates, and honey. A rare treat and only the first-day student received it.

The sweet cake was prepared in a special way. Sometimes the teacher would make it in the shape of a letter of the alphabet that stood for "Torah" or "Law." Sometimes he decorated it with frosting or icing, writing letters that symbolized the Law or Torah.

The teacher explains the shape and symbols on the sweet cake. And once again, Jesus repeats after the teacher. "The Law shall be my calling." Once again, the teacher tells Jesus to eat the sweet cake. As He eats and the other kids watch, the teacher says, "May the Holy Law, always be to you as sweet as the finest dessert. And as this food gives strength to your body, may your strength come from the Law of God all the days of your life."

When the young Jesus finishes the sweet cake, it is time for prayer. The teacher puts his hand on Jesus' curly little head and he prays the prayer of "Two Petitions." First he prays and asks that the angels of God will open Jesus' heart. Second, he prays that God will strengthen the boy's mind and His memory so that He will never forget the day when He promised, "The Law shall be my calling." And with the prayer of Two Petitions the first day of school was over for yet another Jewish boy.

Well, would this type of education work?

From that first day of school in which Jesus "ate the book" as sweet as honey, and when He ate the sweet cakes and promised, "The Law shall be my calling," let's move ahead some 28 years. Would Jesus, a quarter of a century or more later, still think that the Law was His calling?

Come with me. Jesus is preaching on the Mount of Beatitudes. Listen carefully. He speaks. "Make no mistake," He says. "Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law . . . I did not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it. Truly, I tell you that not one punctuation point of the Law shall pass away till heaven and earth pass away. And whoever breaks the least of these commandments and teaches men to do so shall be the least in the kingdom of heaven, but anyone who keeps the Law and teaches others to keep it, that one will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (author's paraphrase of Matt 5: 17-20).

I ask you, did it work? That first day of school was an educational experience that Jesus never got over (Reginald Cross. Used by permission of the author).

### **For Reflection and Discussion**

List three important things about teaching and learning that the foregoing account brings to your mind. What teaching opportunities exist for preachers?

## Formative Preaching—A Discipline of Service

*Read and discuss these quotes about preaching in your Base Group. Answer the questions that follow and prepare a report on preaching as a discipline of service for the class.*

“There is, perhaps, no greater hardship at present inflicted on mankind in civilized and free countries, than the necessity of listening to sermons. No one but a preaching clergyman has . . . the power of compelling an audience to sit silent and be tormented. No one but a preaching clergyman can revel in platitudes, truisms and untruisms, and yet receive, as his undisputed privilege, the same respectful demeanour as though words of impassioned eloquence, or persuasive logic, fell from his lips.”

—Anthony Trollope, *Barchester Towers*, 1857

“It is a sin to assemble a congregation each week and enter into the pulpit poorly prepared.”

—Arndt L. Halvorson, *Authentic Preaching*

“Spiritual formation occurs through the ministry of preaching. . . . preaching acts as one of the greatest tools of spiritual formation within the church.”

—Mel Lawrenz, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation*

Formative preaching is “an event of the Word. The living Word (Christ) and the written Word (the Scriptures), in conjunction with the spoken word (sermon), creates an event of the Word, as the servant of the Word proclaims upon the housetops what he or she has heard in secret.”

—Wesley Tracy, *What's a Nice God like You Doing in a Place like This?* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1990), 11.

*In what ways is personal spiritual formation expressed in the service discipline of preaching?*

Good preaching is based on the Good Book. Good preaching comes from good people. Good preaching needs good structure.

*How does spiritual formation contribute to these three statements about good preaching?*

## Evangelism and Mission—A Discipline of Service

*Read and discuss this story in your Base Group. Answer the questions that follow and prepare a report on evangelism and mission as a discipline of service for the class.*

### Who Will Answer Her Questions?

Dr. Fred Craddock told in a sermon about attending a joint meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature. Some 3,000 of the world's best scholars and teachers had gathered in Los Angeles to dig into papers, lectures, and panel discussions of the most scholarly sort. Craddock said it took a lot of energy just to listen to those deep papers, so he took a coffee break. In the lobby of the hotel where the meeting was being held a woman, about 40, stopped him just outside the coffee shop. "Are you attending the meeting here of Bible people?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Can anyone come?"

"Well, to some of the lessons, yes."

"Well, I want to come," she said.

"Why?" Craddock asked.

She told him that since she was 16 she had walked the streets selling her body. "The other night," she said, "I caught my teenage daughter beginning to do the same thing. I want to become a Christian. I've got to do something."

She had a Bible, an old Bible with a zipper. "I couldn't think of a lesson I could send her to," said Craddock.

They went into the coffee shop. Dr. Craddock (a New Testament scholar) opened her Bible and read her some of it. They talked. He explained the gospel. They prayed. Then Craddock made a phone call to a church in the neighborhood. A pastor from that church came, and the pastor and the new believer drove away together.

By this time Craddock had completely missed the lecture on "A Postmodern Critique of the Bultmannian Hermeneutic."

Scholarship is important. Without it the Church would sink in prejudice and sentimentality. Craddock explained why he missed the lesson. "Somebody had to answer the woman's questions."

### Reflection and Discussion

1. What does this true story tell you about ministerial priorities?
2. What does it tell you about the "readiness" of people to listen to the gospel?
3. What does this story say about the place of the Bible in personal evangelism?
4. Does this story say that scholarship is of little value?
5. What does this story say about the role of the local church in nurturing converts?

## Mercy and Compassion—A Discipline of Service

Read and discuss these quotes in your Base Group. Complete the response that follows and prepare a report on mercy and compassion as a discipline of service for the class.

### Pity Is Not Enough

The French are great cyclists and the Tour de France the greatest bicycle race of all. If you watch the French team, you will see the *domestique* (the word means “servant”). He will not win the race. He is not intended to win. Yet mile after weary mile he pedals on. His job is to shield the top cyclist who will win the race. The *domestique* shields him from the wind and creates a draft in which the “star” cyclist will ride throughout the race. The *domestique* gets no trophy, no wild cheers from adoring fans. The one he has enabled to win the race is crowned—and that is enough for him. Holy service is all about becoming a *domestique* for Christ and our fellow travelers (Wes Tracy, et al. *Reflecting God*, 158).

It is not enough to occasionally feel pity for those in need. We must, if we are to be truly Christian *domestique*, step into identity and solidarity with those in any kind of need. Consider these thoughts on this topic.

“It is a fact that every time a man feels a noble impulse without taking action, he becomes less likely ever to take action. In a sense it is true to say that a man has no right to feel sympathy unless he at least tries to put that sympathy into action” (William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible, James and Peter*, 76).

“Anyone can salve his conscience by an occasional foray into knitting for the spastic home. Did you ever take a real trip down inside the broken heart of a friend? To feel the sob of the soul—the raw, red crucible of emotional agony. . . . This is the beginning of compassion” (Jess Moody, *Quote—Unquote*, [Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1977], 66).

Christlike compassion “is not knowing *about* the suffering and pain of others. It is in some way knowing that pain, entering in to it, sharing it and tasting it” (Matthew Fox, *A Spirituality Named Compassion* [Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1971], 21).

“There should be less talk; a preaching point is not a meeting point. What do you do then? Take a broom and clean someone’s house. That says enough?” (Mother Teresa of Calcutta, as quoted by Janine Tartaglia, et al. *The Upward Call*, 235).

“The church will not wax radiant until we learn how to receive love. . . . There is a certain superiority when we give love to others, and a certain helplessness when others offer love to us. When we give love we are in control. We pick the person or persons we will honor with our love, how much we will dole out at a time, and if and when we will give it. When we are on the receiving end of love and assistance we are no longer in control. The other person decides how, when, and how much. We are almost helpless as receivers, but we must learn to receive love from each other or settle for being a proudly grim bunch of believers” (*Reflecting God*, 157).

### Response

Discuss these quotations about mercy and compassion and determine a story, true or imaginary, that demonstrates one or more of the points made in the quotations.

## Angelina: Servant of Her Savior

### How Gifted Do You Have to Be to Serve?

If they had Oscars and Emmys for Christian witness and service, my vote would go to Angelina.

I don't know the real name of this Puerto Rican lady, so let me name her according to her angel-like character.

Angelina lives in Hell's Kitchen—that section of New York where flying bullets and cruising thugs put the life expectancy graph into a sharp nosedive.

But Angelina got saved at pastor Bill Wilson's church. And you know how it is—you get saved and you want to give and serve.

With the help of an interpreter she asked her pastor for a job in the church. Not being able to speak a word of English, what in the world could she do? Pastor Wilson told her to ride the Sunday School buses and "love the kids." She did.

Soon she came back and said she wanted to ride just one bus. You see, on that one route was a special little boy who came to the Saturday kid's ministry and to Sunday School every week. He was a sad little guy with hungry eyes who never uttered a sound, not one word, ever.

So every week Angelina held the child on her lap on the bus and loved him the best she could. She even learned one sentence in English to pass on to the boy, "I love you and Jesus loves you." She told him this over and over, week after week.

One day to her astonishment the little guy looked up into her face and stammered, "I—I

love you too." Finally! Finally he had responded to love!

That was 2:30 on a Saturday afternoon. At 6:30 that evening, when most Christians were settling down to watch "Wheel of Fortune" or ESPN someone found the boy's body in a garbage bag under the fire escape.

Someone said that the little fellow had knocked over the last bottle of beer in the house. His mother beat him to death and threw him in the garbage.

Angelina had so little to give. But when God needed someone to be the "light of the world" to a little neglected and rejected boy who had never known love, Angelina was ready. Did she know she was ministering to Jesus himself?

*We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him. . . . Since . . . we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men (2 Cor 5:10-11)*

From *Reflecting God*, 153-54. Used by permission.

### Response

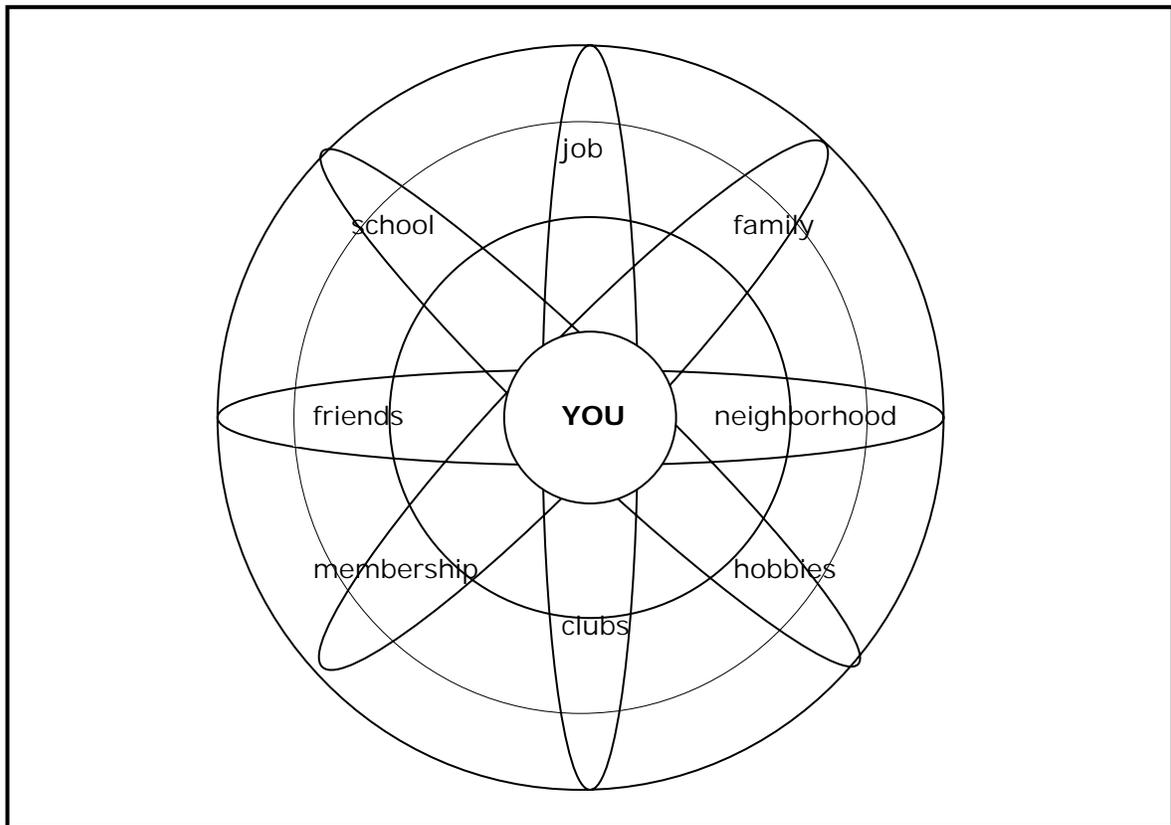
1. Prayer. This true story makes us want to pray, not testify.
2. Do Something on Purpose. After prayer, share with one another some definite ideas for acts of compassion that the class can perform, and that individual students can do.

### Plans for Action:

## Who Could I Win to Christ?

Most people who find Christ are led to the Lord by someone they know—a family member, friend, neighbor, coworker. That is to say, that each of us has a network of people whom we influence. Home, job, neighborhood, school, family, clubs—in all these we touch people who know us and may be attracted (or repelled) by the life we live.

An ad for a lamp manufacturer pictures several glowing lamps. The boldfaced words say, “Now you know how a moth feels.” Many lost in this world’s dark night will be powerfully attracted by a life of Christlikeness lived out in the home, the workplace, or the school.



**1. The names of people in my network who need to find the Lord include:**

**2. In what ways do you think the Lord wants you to minister to them? When?**

## **Lesson 20: Wesleyan-Holiness Spirituality, An Overview**

### **Due this Lesson**

Resource 19-6  
Journaling  
Journal check

### **Learner Objectives**

To help students

- step back and take a wide-angled view of Wesleyan spiritual theology as it has unfolded during the course and as it is summarized and evaluated in today's lesson
- appreciate the "big picture" of this course and embrace the progress made in their own spiritual journey
- to insightfully implement the ideas and insights of today's lesson by way of intelligent discussion and planning
- make an objective evaluation of this course and the academic and spiritual exercises it provided

### **Homework Assignments**

#### **For a Lifetime**

Commit to BE a student of God's grace.

#### **Journal Prompt:**

Reflect on Philippians 3: 10, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection."

# Wesleyan-Holiness Spiritual Theology for Today

## Characteristics of Vital Wesleyan-Holiness Spirituality

As your learning leader speaks on the 20 characteristics of Wesleyan-Holiness spirituality, take careful notes in the space provided.

1. A Gracious Principle
2. A Soteriological Aim
3. A Spirituality of Radical Optimism
4. An Ecumenical Spirit
5. A Biblical Foundation
6. A Christ-Centered Focus
7. A Synthetic Method
8. A Dynamic Character
9. Values Spiritual Experience
10. Wesleyan-Holiness Spirituality Values Christian Ethics
11. A Magnetic Attraction to the Poor and Oppressed
12. Mutual Guidance, Accountability, and Encouragement Through Small Groups
13. The Church as Community
14. Values Prayer, Meditation, and Devotional Reading
15. Christian Service Is an Essential Spiritual Discipline
16. Self-examination and Self-knowledge

- 17. Self-surrender and Self-transcendence the Key to Holy Living
- 18. Pure Hearts, Attitudes, and Motives
- 19. Detachment from the World
- 20. Holiness or Christian Perfection as Love

**For Reflection and Discussion**

- 1. In terms of spiritual formation and Christian nurture, the most “Wesleyan” thing that happens in the church I pastor or attend is . . .
- 2. At what points is the social setting in which you work like or unlike that of John Wesley?
- 3. The best idea about spiritual formation and the holy life that came to my mind during this lecture was . . .
- 4. One idea in the lecture that I want to know more about is . . .
- 5. Evaluate the theme of “Radical Optimism” as a distinctive element of Wesleyan spirituality.
- 6. After considering the elements in Wesleyan spirituality, what part of it is the hardest for you to maintain in your own personal devotional life? In your church?

**Notes**

## A Group Project

# A Brochure or Website

Starting with the 20 characteristics of Wesleyan-Holiness spirituality given in Resource 20-1, plan a brochure that defines what your local Wesleyan-Holiness church is and does. The target audience could include:

- Unchurched people in your neighborhood whom your calling teams visit
- Visitors to your church
- Candidates for membership in your church who are in a membership training course

The **brochure** will have four pages. Working together, plan each page. Plan the words and the graphics for the cover and for each of the other three pages.

You may choose to design, instead of a brochure, an **Internet website** that introduces your church. Start with the 20 characteristics given in the lecture.

## Evaluation of the “Wesleyan Way” Module and Experiences

|  | Excel-<br>lent | Good | Okay | Below<br>Avg. | Poor | Does<br>Not<br>Apply |
|--|----------------|------|------|---------------|------|----------------------|
| 1. How would you rate your overall “Wesleyan Way to Spiritual Formation” experience?   |                |      |      |               |      |                      |
| 2. Rate the effectiveness of “The Wesleyan Way” in enhancing community through spiritual friendship, faith mentoring, and Christian fellowship in your own life. |                |      |      |               |      |                      |
| 3. Are you now a better minister than you were before taking this course?  |                |      |      |               |      |                      |
| 4. Evaluate the role of this course in enhancing personal spiritual growth in your life.   |                |      |      |               |      |                      |
| 5. To what extent was the content relevant, fresh, insightful, and understandable?   |                |      |      |               |      |                      |
| 6. To what extent were the stories, examples, quotations, etc., effective in communicating ideas and inspiration?  |                |      |      |               |      |                      |
| 7. Evaluate the success of the writers and editors in putting the materials between “too simple” and “too complex.”  |                |      |      |               |      |                      |
| 8. Grade the relevance of the material to your life and ministry situation.  |                |      |      |               |      |                      |
| 9. Rate the materials on appearance and level of “user friendliness.”  |                |      |      |               |      |                      |
| 10. Rate the level of success in communicating the importance of Scripture.  |                |      |      |               |      |                      |
| 11. How successful were the materials in communicating salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ?   |                |      |      |               |      |                      |
| 12. Evaluate the presentation of confession, repentance, and adoption as the path to new life in Christ.   |                |      |      |               |      |                      |

|  | <b>Excel-<br/>lent</b> | <b>Good</b> | <b>Okay</b> | <b>Below<br/>Avg.</b> | <b>Poor</b> | <b>Does<br/>Not<br/>Apply</b> |
|--|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 13. How effective was the presentation of the holy life as transformation into Christlikeness?   |                        |             |             |                       |             |                               |
| 14. To what extent was the privilege of intimacy with God made real?   |                        |             |             |                       |             |                               |
| 15. To what extent was the presentation of "loving submission" or "self-surrender" as the key to the holy life clearly communicated?               |                        |             |             |                       |             |                               |
| 16. Rate the effectiveness of the presentation of Wesleyan distinctives like sanctification and helping the needy as spiritual disciplines.        |                        |             |             |                       |             |                               |
| 17. Grade the effectiveness of the module in emphasizing the need for faith mentoring, spiritual friends, and face-to-face groups.                 |                        |             |             |                       |             |                               |
| 18. How effective was the teaching about how to study the Bible?   |                        |             |             |                       |             |                               |
| 19. How effective was the teaching of prayer and meditation skills?  |                        |             |             |                       |             |                               |
| 20. How effective were the materials in teaching the importance of worship and the sacraments?   |                        |             |             |                       |             |                               |
| 21. To what degree were the materials effective in teaching the use of music in the spiritual life?  |                        |             |             |                       |             |                               |
| 22. How effective was the Base Group strategy?   |                        |             |             |                       |             |                               |
| 23. Evaluate the use of the Jigsaw Method.   |                        |             |             |                       |             |                               |
| 24. Evaluate the effectiveness of the journaling experience in terms of how it helped you clarify spiritual issues and helped you face up to them. |                        |             |             |                       |             |                               |
| 25. Rate the effectiveness of the journaling exercises in bringing theory and practice together.   |                        |             |             |                       |             |                               |
| 26. Grade the "weight" of the homework assignments in terms of the golden mean of being just right without being too hard or too light.            |                        |             |             |                       |             |                               |

## **One for the Road Ahead**

O Lord,

Be thou a bright flame before me,

Be thou a guiding star above me,

Be thou a smooth path below me,

Be thou a kindly shepherd behind me.

Today—tonight—and forever.

Amen.

St. Columba, 6th century