

# HOLISTIC FORMATION

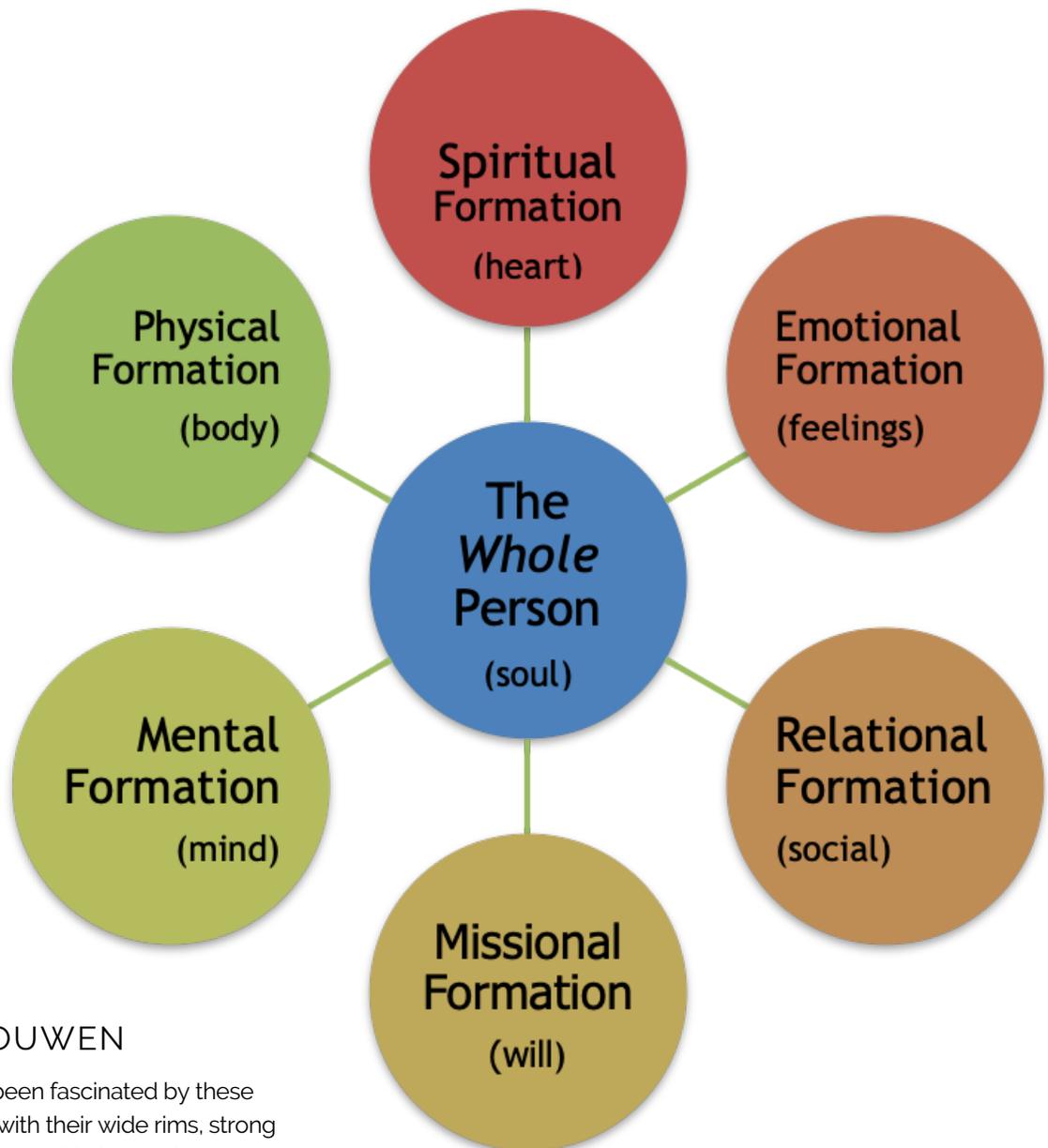


**“THE SALVATION OR DELIVERANCE OF THE BELIEVER IN CHRIST IS ESSENTIALLY HOLISTIC OR WHOLE-LIFE... A MAJOR PART OF UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN THE CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS IS TO FOLLOW CLOSELY THE WAY THE BIBLICAL WRITINGS REPEATEDLY AND EMPHATICALLY FOCUS ON THE VARIOUS ESSENTIAL DIMENSIONS OF THE HUMAN BEING THEIR ROLE IN LIFE AS A WHOLE.”**

Dallas Willard

# DIMENSIONS OF OUR FORMATION

"Holistic Formation" is a whole-person perspective of the ongoing process of transformation needed to thrive as followers of Jesus. It involves focusing on the following dimensions so that all are integrated and none are ignored or neglected.



## HENRI NOUWEN

"I have always been fascinated by these wagon wheels with their wide rims, strong wooden spokes, and big hubs. These wheels help me understand the importance of a life lived from the center. When I move along the rim, I can reach one spoke after the other, but when I stay at the hub, I am in touch with all the spokes at once."

# SPIRITUAL FORMATION

"DEAR GOD, I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE I AM GOING.  
I DO NOT SEE THE ROAD AHEAD OF ME.  
I CANNOT KNOW FOR CERTAIN WHERE IT WILL END.  
NOR DO I REALLY KNOW MYSELF . . .  
AND THE FACT THAT I THINK THAT I AM FOLLOWING YOUR WILL DOES NOT MEAN THAT I AM  
ACTUALLY DOING SO.  
BUT I BELIEVE THIS:  
I BELIEVE THAT THE DESIRE TO PLEASE YOU DOES IN FACT PLEASE YOU.  
I HOPE I HAVE THAT DESIRE IN EVERYTHING I DO.  
I HOPE I NEVER PERSIST IN ANYTHING APART FROM THAT DESIRE.  
AND I KNOW THAT IF I DO THIS YOU WILL LEAD ME BY THE RIGHT ROAD,  
THOUGH I MAY KNOW NOTHING ABOUT IT AT THE TIME.  
THEREFORE, I WILL TRUST YOU ALWAYS, FOR THOUGH I MAY BE LOST - AND IN THE SHADOW  
OF DEATH - I WILL NOT BE AFRAID, BECAUSE I KNOW YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE ME TO FACE MY  
TROUBLES ALL ALONE."

Thomas Merton



# SPIRITUAL FORMATION

## Definition

The process through which individuals who have received new life “from above” take on the character of Jesus by a combination of effort and grace.

Spiritual formation = taking on the character of Christ by a combination of effort & grace.

## 2 Peter 3:18

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

- Our lives increase in:
  - **Grace** (God acting in our life) *\*Grace is opposed to earning not effort*
  - **Knowledge** (interactive relationship with God)
- It is not a matter of behaving in certain ways, but of being inwardly and thoroughly a different kind of person

## HENRI NOUWEN

“In a society that overvalues progress, development, and personal achievement, the spiritual life becomes quite easily performance-oriented: “On what level am I now, and how do I move to the next one?”—“When will I reach union with God?”—“When will I experience illumination or enlightenment?”

## A.W. TOZER

“We have substituted theological ideas for an arresting encounter; we are full of religious notions but our great weakness is that for our hearts there is no one there.”

# WHO AM I? WHO IS GOD?

## **Luke 3:22**

22and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son;[a] with you I am well pleased."

## **1 John 3:1**

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

## **Ephesians 5:1**

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children

## **Galatians 4:5-7**

to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

## **John 1:12-13**

12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

## **Ephesians 3:16-19**

16 I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, 17 and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. 18 I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

## HENRI NOUWEN

"The challenge is to let go of fear and claim the deeper truth of who I am. When you forget your true identity as a beloved child of God, you lose your way in life. You become scared and start doing things not freely, but because of fear. But when you make space for God in your life and begin to listen to God's loving voice, you suddenly start to realize perfect love. You can claim it, and you can gradually let go of your fear. The fear may come back tomorrow and you will have to struggle, and you can again return from fear to love. Every time you feel afraid, you can open yourself to God's presence, hear God's voice again, and be brought back to perfect love that casts out fear and brings in greater freedom."

# PSALM 23

Dallas Willard - "Life Without Lack"

## ***The Lord is my shepherd.***

In other words, I'm in the care of someone else. I'm not the one in charge. I've taken my kingdom and surrendered it to the kingdom of God. I am living the with-God life. The Lord is my shepherd. And what follows from that?

## ***I shall not want.***

That's the natural result. I shall not lack anything. That's what Jesus teaches: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," and everything else will be added (Matt. 6:33).

## ***He makes me to lie down in green pastures.***

What kind of a sheep lies down in a green pasture? A sheep that has eaten its fill. If a sheep is in a green pasture and she's not full, she'll be eating, not lying down.

## ***He leads me beside the still waters.***

A sheep that is being led beside still water is a sheep that is not thirsty. Jesus said to the woman at the well, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13-14).

## ***He restores my soul.***

The broken depths of my soul are healed and reintegrated in a life in union with God: the eternal kind of life.

## ***He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.***

The effect of the restoration of my soul is that I walk in paths of righteousness on his behalf as a natural expression of my renewed inner nature. As I walk these paths, my trust in the Shepherd runs so deep that I can declare:

## ***Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.***

A life without lack is one that carries no fear of evil. Our confidence in God soars far above wants and fears. Would you like to have a life without fear, a life of soaring faith? It seems like Jesus was constantly saying to his friends, "Fear not! Fear not!" Imagine what that would be like. No fear of life, aging or death, disease or hunger, no fear of any person or creature, not even the loss of all your possessions. You can live without fear even in the midst of a world dominated by fear. I could easily have chosen "fear no evil" as this book's theme, because we are talking about a life from which fear is eliminated. While the psalmist clearly knows about life's dangers, he can still say, "I will fear no evil." Why? Please read his answer out loud:

# PSALM 23

Continued

## ***For You are with me.***

The central truth of this book is that the complete sufficiency of the life without lack is based upon the presence of God, and he is most clearly and fully present to us in Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us.

## ***Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.***

I know from experience that the rod and staff represent the Shepherd's strength and protective care. In this safe place where I have no fear, I am at liberty to enjoy the overwhelming generosity of my Shepherd.

## ***You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.***

Since I love my enemies,\* I would not feast upon a delicious meal in their presence and let them stand there hungry. The abundance of God's provision and safety in my life is so great, I would invite them to enjoy what God has prepared for me.

## ***You anoint my head with oil.***

Here you might think in terms of hot showers and warm fluffy towels, things that make us feel clean, comfortable, and special, and how God makes that possible. He is not only interested in my having something wonderful to eat, but also in blessing me with a life that is full and free and powerful in him—including clothing, comfortable furnishings, joyful experiences, and deep relationships. So much so that the abundance of God's provision rings out from the psalmist's pen:

## ***My cup is full!***

Is that what it says? No. "My cup runs over." I have more than my cup will hold. So much that I can be as generous as my Shepherd without fear of ever running out. So much so that I am convinced:

## ***Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.***

This is a description of the eternal life available to us now in the kingdom of the heavens; the abundant with-God life that comes from following the Shepherd, where we dwell and abide with God in the fullness of his life—a life in which all the promises of Christ's gospel are realized. Because of this, we have no reason to be anxious (Phil. 4:6–7); the world is a perfectly safe place for us to be.

# SOLITUDE



**"IT IS IN SOLITUDE THAT WE DISCOVER THAT  
BEING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HAVING AND  
THAT WE ARE WORTH MORE THAN THE RESULTS  
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

# CENTERING PRAYER

Jason Phillips

"Prayer is not a request for God's favors. True, it has been used to obtain the satisfaction of personal desires. It has even been adopted to reinforce the prejudices, justify violence, and create barriers between people and between countries. But genuine prayer is based on recognizing the Origin of all that exists, and opening ourselves to it...In prayer we acknowledge God as the supreme source from which flows all strength, all goodness, all existence, acknowledging that we have our being, life itself from the supreme Power. One can then communicate with this Source, worship it, and ultimately place ones very center in it."

**Piero Ferrucci**

## **Instructions:**

The first step is to find a one-syllable word like "God", "King", "Love", or "Abba". Repeat this word only as a thought comes to mind not over and over like a mantra. It doesn't matter what word it is or that the word might have a special meaning, it may take you some time to find the word but never use different words in one session of prayer. If you focus on the word it will become a distraction and the point is to get rid of all distractions. Try to spend at least 20 minutes in this prayer and follow the method below.

1. Find a quiet spot with a chair. Sit upright and be as relaxed and comfortable as you possibly can be. If you can be in the same space every time it is better. You could have pictures of your family, a cross, icon, or picture anything that might draw your attention towards God's love. Keep your eyes closed unless you start to fall asleep.
2. Take some time and settle. Recite the Lord's Prayer, Psalm 23, or another passage to begin centering your attention on God.
3. Once you have settled sit silently. Every time a thought or anything comes to mind recite your word releasing the thought.
4. At the end of your time (20 minutes) recite a bible passage as you did at the beginning to re-enter into the world.

The Four R's: (Cynthia Bourgeault Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening)

Resist no thought

Retain no Thought

React to no thought

Return to your sacred word.

## **Bibliography and Suggested Reading**

Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening by Cynthia Bourgeault

The Cloud of Unknowing by unknown English monk

# BREATH PRAYER

Jason Phillips

## **1 Thessalonians 5:17**

“Pray without ceasing”

### **How?**

Practices

Repeating a simple one sentence prayer. That can start with addressing God then followed by a phrase expressing your deepest desire of God. Connect your prayer to breathing and return to it throughout the day until it becomes a reflex of the soul.

Can be short prayers of love and desire

- “Lord Jesus, Have mercy on me.” (Luke 18:38)
- “Be Still, and know I am God.” (Psalm 40:10)
- “Shepherd lead me, by still waters” (Psalm 23)
- “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening” (1 Samuel 3:10)
- “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want” (Psalm 23:1)
- “Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me” (Mark 10:47)
- “Teacher, let me see again” (Bartimaeus' request; Mark 10:51)
- “Establish thou, the work of my hands.” (Psalm 90:17)
- “God, have mercy on me a sinner” (Luke 18:13)
- “Abba, I belong to you” (Romans 8:15)
- “Come, Lord Jesus, come” (Revelation 22:20)
- “My Lord and My God”
- “My help is in the name of the Lord”
- “Jesus my light and my love”
- “Come, Lord Jesus, be my guest”
- “I belong to you, O Lord”
- “Jesus, let me feel your love” (or power, strength, etc.)
- “Lead me, Lord; I will follow”
- “Show me your way, Lord Jesus”
- “Jesus lead me into joy” (or peace, patience, etc.)

### **Why?**

- Biblical origins: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me” (Luke 18:38); the ten lepers who “called to him, Jesus, Master, take pity on us! ” (Luke 17:13); and the cry for mercy of the publican, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner” (Luke 18:14).

## **2 Peter 1:3-4**

Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God has been miraculously given to us by getting to know, personally and intimately, the One who invited us to God. The best invitation we ever received! We were also given absolutely terrific promises to pass on to you—your tickets to participation in the life of God after you turned your back on a world corrupted by lust.

The Prayer of the heart is a prayer that does not allow us to limit our relationship with God to interesting words or pious emotions. By its very nature such prayer transforms our whole being into Christ precisely because it opens the eyes of our soul to the truth of ourselves as well as to the truth of God.

### **The Way of the Heart, Henri Nouwen**

#### **Fruit**

"When I prayed in my heart, everything around me seemed delightful and marvelous. The trees, the grass, the birds, the air, the light seemed to be telling me that they existed for man's sake, that they witnessed to the love of God for man, that all things prayed to God and sang his praise."

"Again I started off on my wanderings. But now I did not walk along as before, filled with care. The invocation of the Name of Jesus gladdened my way. Everybody was kind to me. If anyone harms me I have only to think, 'How sweet is the Prayer of Jesus!' and the injury and the anger alike pass away and I forget it all."

#### **- The Way of the Pilgrim, Unknown Russian Peasant**

- Walking every moment with Jesus whether you feel his company or not
- Abiding in Christ
- Expressing the deepest desire of your heart in prayer
- A reminder that God is present
- Developing a rhythm of turning to God throughout the day
- Praying without ceasing

#### **Bibliography and Suggested Reading**

*The Way of the Pilgrim and the Pilgrim Continues His Way* translated by Helen Bacovcin

*The Way of the Heart* by Henri J. Nouwen

*Practicing His Presence or The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence

# SCRIPTURE



**"THE BIBLE, ALL OF IT, IS LIVABLE; IT IS THE  
TEXT FOR LIVING OUR LIVES. IT REVEALS A GOD-  
CREATED, GOD-ORDERED, GOD-BLESSED WORLD  
IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES AT HOME AND  
WHOLE."**

Eugene Peterson

# INGNATION MEDITATION

Jason Phillips from Jan Johnson Workshop

## WHY MEDITATE ON SCRIPTURE?

Meditation helps us to become “careful to do everything written in the Word” (Joshua 1:8). Praying with Scripture allows God to lead us in our prayer. Using our imagination is a tool to be present to God’s word to us, allowing God to shape our time together, and riding us of our own agenda. The fruit is a deep love of God’s Scriptures and practice in listening to God.

How is *meditation* on Scripture different from *study* of Scripture?

## STUDY

- *Dissect the text*
- *Ask questions about the text*
- *Read and compare facts and new ways of applying the facts*

## MEDITATION

- *Hear the text and enter into it*
- *Let the text ask questions of you*
- *Read to let God speak to you*

## HOW DO WE DO THIS

- Be a “fly on the wall”: If you had been present, what sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and textures would you have experienced?
- Let God put you in the passage, perhaps becoming the person Jesus is speaking to. Let Jesus look you in the eyes, sitting face to face, and speak to you. What do sense as Jesus speaks to you? What facial expressions do you notice?
- Use your imagination, but still be WORD-centered
- Approach Scripture in a non-controlling manner: Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.– James 1:21

Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

Then Jesus told them this parable: "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. **(Luke 15:1-7)**

# LECTIO DIVINA

Michael Bischoff

“Our desire to know more, read more and study more can be another expression of our culture and it’s acquisitive nature. knowing God, not knowing more, is the goal.”

**Richard Rohr**

**Lectio Divina** (pronounced LEX-ee-o dih-VEE-nuh) is a Latin phrase for the sacred reading of Scripture

## History

- It is a method of reading Scripture that innumerable monks, nuns, and followers of Christ have used since the earliest days of the church.
- It was St. Benedict (ca.480-ca.550) who cemented the practice in Western monasticism, and Guigo II (ca. 1115-ca.1198) who articulated the practice even further in his book *Scala Claustralium* (The Ladder of Monastics).

## Description

- It is a method of reading the Bible in a devotional way (as opposed to literal, moral, or allegorical) – believing that, because it is God’s inspired Word, it’s a living and active text, that has something to say to each individual believer.
- Lectio divina assumes that, by entering deeply into the text of God’s holy Word, God will be made known to us, speak to us, and shape our lives.
- It is reading the Bible with no agenda, no presuppositions.
- One needs to purposefully shed the common methods most of us use in our everyday reading (such as reading for entertainment or information).

## Practice

- Find a Bible translation or paraphrase that is easily readable.
- Use a Bible without notes, underlining, or study helps – anything that will distract you from what God is saying to you today.
- Pay attention to your surroundings – you want quiet or silence, enough light to read but not so bright to be distracting, and no other distractions (like phones).
- Choose a time of day when you are wide awake and set aside enough time to hear from God.
- Choose a text of Scripture that you sense will be a good source of devotion for you. While all of Scripture can be used for this, as you are beginning it might be best to choose a Psalm, something from the gospels, or a short paragraph from one of the epistles.
- You might begin with a prayer requesting and expecting God’s presence and direction.

# Structure

## **Reading** a passage of Scripture (*lectio*)

- Read the scripture slowly, repeatedly, and aloud if possible
- Allow the text to trigger memories and associations that reside below the threshold of awareness
- Be calm, deliberate, gradual, and listening hard for what God has to say to you
- Imagine what your temperament will be in heaven sitting at God's feet
- Listen for a word or phrase that rises above the rest of text ("rings") and grabs a hold of you
- Reading aloud helps the words and phrases resonate in the ear

## **Meditation** on that passage (*meditatio*)

- This is the "interior intelligence" of the text – what seem to be the values, the underlying assumptions and presumptions of this passage?
- How is my life touched today by this passage?
- What is this passage inviting me to do?
- As you attend to those deeper meanings, begin to meditate on the feelings and emotions that are conjured up in your inner self

## **Prayer** (*oratio*)

- Although it is all prayer, here one deliberately asks God for illumination
- Respond to God, telling your desire to respond to the invitation or asking questions

## **Contemplation** (*contemplatio*)

- Silent waiting on God
- Where your prayer moves beyond words and intellect into a place where time and eternity almost touch
- This final step takes patience and practice, and is often the most difficult to achieve
- It may be merely a moment of silence, peace, and rest in the midst of 10 minutes of struggle to quiet your mind

# MENTAL FORMATION

**"THE FIRST FRUIT OF LOVE IS THE MUSING OF THE MIND UPON GOD. HE WHO IS IN LOVE, HIS THOUGHTS ARE EVER UPON THE OBJECT. HE WHO LOVES GOD IS RAVISHED AND TRANSPORTED WITH THE CONTEMPLATION OF GOD...GOD IS THE TREASURE, AND WHERE THE TREASURE IS, THERE IS THE HEART."**

Thomas Watson



# MENTAL FORMATION

## MENTAL FORMATION

Mental formation = renewing our minds by focusing on who God is and his wisdom for us

### Definition

The consistent renewing of our minds and thinking so that we are centered on God and his wisdom for our lives. The place of God in our minds. Often called “practicing the presence of God.”

### Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. 2Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

### ISAIAH 26:2-4 (MSG)

---

People with their minds set on you,  
you keep completely whole,  
Steady on their feet,  
because they keep at it and don't quit.  
Depend on God and keep at it  
because in the Lord God you have a sure thing.

### COLOSSIANS 3:1-2

---

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth

## The Need

## Barriers

# MENTAL FORMATION

## What Might a Joyful Mind Be?

- When your mind does not need to be right.
- When you no longer need to compare yourself with others.
- When you no longer need to compete - not even in your own head.
- When your mind can be creative, but without needing anyone to know.
- When you can live in contentment with whatever the moment offers.
- When you do not need to analyze or judge things in or out, positive or negative.
- When your mind does not need to be in charge but can serve the moment with gracious and affirming information.
- When your mind follows the intelligent lead of your heart.
- When your mind is curious and interested, not suspicious and interrogating.  
When your mind does not "brood over injuries."
- When you do not need to humiliate, critique, or defeat those who have hurt you - not even in your mind.
- When your mind does not need to create self-justifying storylines.
- When your mind does not need the future to be better than today.
- When your mind can let go of obsessive or negative thoughts.
- When your mind can think well of itself, but without needing to.
- When your mind can accept yourself as you are, warts and all.
- When your mind can surrender to what is.
- When your mind does not divide and always condemns one side or group.
- When your mind can find truth on both sides.
- When your mind fills in the gaps with "the benefit of the doubt" for both friend and enemy.
- When your mind can critique and also detach from the critique.
- When your mind can wait, listen, and learn.
- When your mind can live satisfied without resolution or closure.
- When your mind can forgive and actually "forget."
- When your mind can admit it was wrong and change.
- When your mind can stop judging and critiquing itself.
- When you don't need to complain or worry to get motivated.
- When you can observe your mind contracting into self-preservation or self-validation, and then laugh or weep over it.
- When you can actually love with your mind.
- When your mind can find God in all things.

--from The Naked Now by Richard Rohr

# DAILY OFFICE

Jason Phillips

I choose to think about every word of a prayer before I vocalize it. Prayer without interior felling is not very effective either for the one who recites it or for the one who listens to it: everything depends on interior life and on attentive prayer! But how few people are occupied with the interior activity! The reasons for this is that they don't really want it; they have no yearning for spiritual life and interior enlightenment.

## **Anonymous priest from The Way of the Pilgrim**

Jews do offer freely composed prayers...But overall, it is the fixed order and content of Jewish prayer that gives it its distinctiveness and that demands the personal commitment to prayer as a discipline.

## **Lawrence Hoffman**

But if routiness is a danger, it is also the way liturgy works. When you don't have to think all the time about what the words you are going to say next, you are free to participate in the life of God.

## **Lauren F. Winner Mudhouse Sabbath**

### **Biblical History of daily prayer hours**

**Daniel 6:10** - Daniel prayed 'three times a day'

**Acts 2:15** - On the day of Pentecost Christ's disciples had assembled for prayer at 'the third hour', 9 a.m.,

**Acts 10:9** - When the Holy Spirit came upon them with dramatic force. Peter went up to the flat roof of the house to pray at 'the sixth hour', noon.

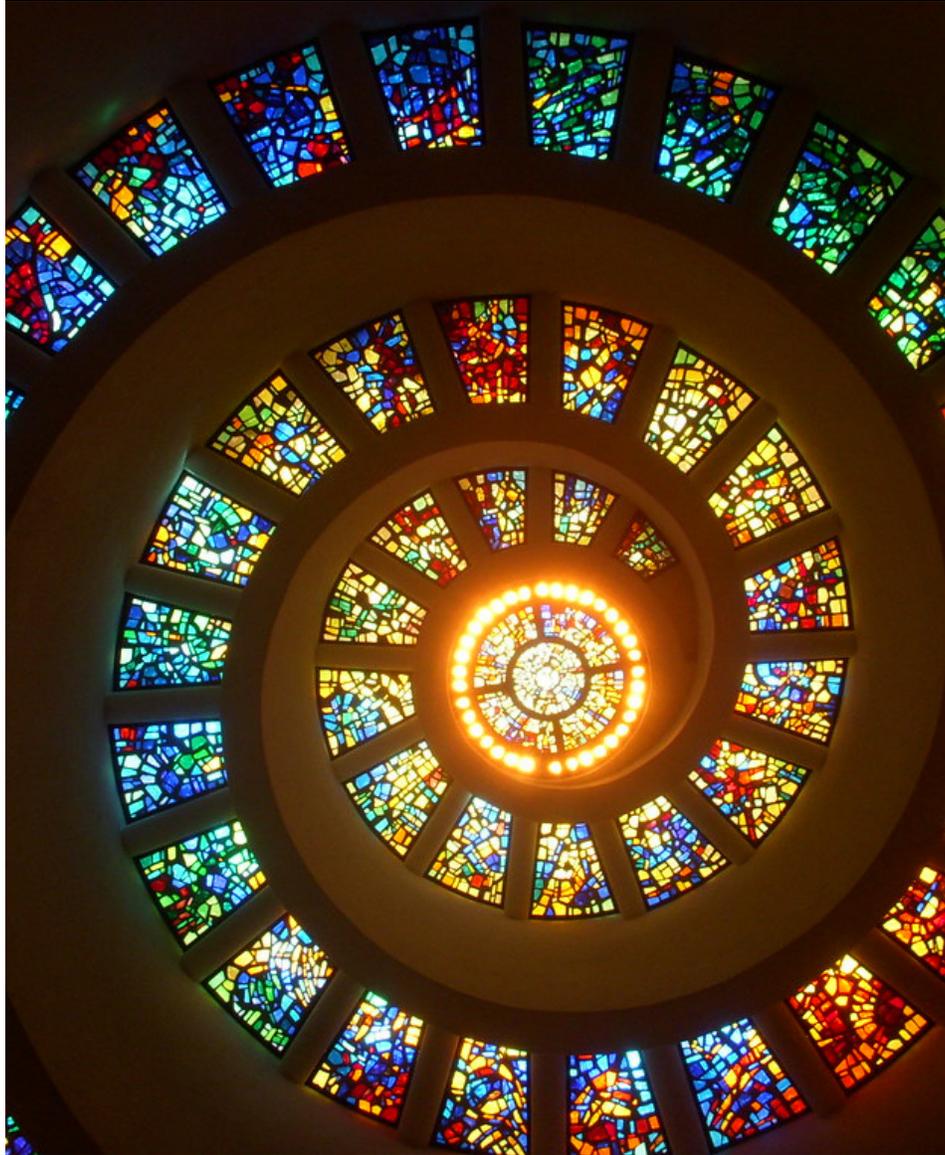
**Acts 3:1** - When he had a vision when led him to welcome the Gentile, Cornelius, into the Christian church. The apostles Peter and John went up to the temple at 'the ninth hour', 3 p.m., and healed a cripple on the way.

**Visit** <https://www.northumbriacommunity.org/offices/how-to-use-daily-office/>

### **BOOK:**

Celtic Daily Prayer: Prayers and Readings from the Northumbria Community

# EXAMEN



"IF YOU WANT TO IDENTIFY ME, ASK ME NOT  
WHERE I LIVE OR WHAT I LIKE TO EAT, OR HOW I  
COMB MY HAIR BUT ASK ME WHAT I AM LIVING  
FOR, IN DETAIL AND ASK ME, WHAT I THINK IS  
KEEPING ME FROM LIVING FULLY FOR THE THING  
I WANT TO LIVE FOR?"

"

Thomas Merton

# PRAYER OF EXAMEN

Jason Phillips

The Examen of Consciousness is an exploration of how God is present within the events, circumstances, feeling of our daily lives. The method reflects the dynamic movement of personal love: what we always want to say to a person whom we truly love. "Thank you...Help me...I love you...I'm sorry...Be with me..."

You can pray through the outline below meditating on each point for a period of time but many also find journaling through this prayer to be a blessing.

## Structure

Loving God, I am totally dependent on you. Everything is a gift from you. **All is a gift.** I give you thanks and praise for the gifts of this day...

God, I believe you work through and in time to reveal me to myself. Please give me an **increased awareness** of how you are guiding and shaping my life, as well as a more sensitive awareness of the obstacles I put in your way...

**You have been present in my life today.** Be near, now, as I reflect on:

Your presence in the events of today...

Your presence in the **feelings** I experienced today...

Your **call** to me...

My **response** to you...

Oh God, I ask **your loving forgiveness and healing.** The particular event of this day that I most want healed is...

Filled with hope and a firm belief in your love and power, **I entrust myself to your care,** and strongly affirm...(Claim the gift you most desire, most need; believe that God desires to give you that gift.)

## Or Simply

- Start with gratitude, thanking God for one or two blessings you received today
- Ask God to fill you with His love. Entrust yourself to Him
- Going hour by hour or moment by moment.
  - Where did you experience God's Presence? Why?
  - Where did he seem to be absent? Why?
- Ask God for forgiveness
- Commit your sleep and morning to Him.

## App

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/reimagining-the-examen/id1065042173>

# EMOTIONAL FORMATION

**"SELF-AFFIRMATION AND SELF-EMPTYING ARE NOT OPPOSITES  
BECAUSE NO MAN CAN GIVE AWAY WHAT HE DOES NOT HAVE. NO ONE  
CAN GIVE HIMSELF IN LOVE WHEN HE IS NOT AWARE OF HIMSELF.  
NOBODY CAN COME TO INTIMACY  
WITHOUT HAVING FOUND HIS IDENTITY ."**

Henri Nouwen



# EMOTIONAL FORMATION

## **EMOTIONAL FORMATION**

Developing increasing awareness into the human parts of our being

### **Definition**

- A process that involves bringing the emotional parts of one's being into conscious self-awareness and focus.
- Bringing issues that have been hidden in darkness out into the light.

### **Mark 7:20-23**

He went on: "What comes out of you is what defiles you. For from within, out of your hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile you."

### KATHERINE WEBER

"Life seems sometimes like nothing more than a series of losses, from beginning to end. That's the given. How you respond to those losses, what you make of what's left, that's the part you have to make up as you go."

### **What's your story?**

# PRAYER OF EXAMEN

## My Emotions

(From the Reimagining the Examen app)  
reimaginingexamen.ignatianspirituality.com

### Exercise:

#### 1. Focus on God's goodness and grace

Spend a few moments in gratitude, thanking God for one or two of the blessings, big and small, that you've received today or the previous day.

#### 2. Review

Instead of reviewing your day hour by hour. Ask God to help you review your day emotion by emotion. How did you feel when you woke up this morning? As you were showering, eating breakfast, getting ready for the day? As your day progressed? And so on.

Allow yourself to quickly pass over the fleeting emotions but dwell on the more pervasive ones or those you hadn't noticed before. Speak with God about your emotions when you noticed shifts in them throughout the day.

Choose the strongest emotion of the day and speak to God about the way you responded to the emotion as the day progressed. What impact did the emotion have on you? Did you acknowledge the emotion as you experienced it, or were you unaware of it at the time? Did you consciously choose how to act on the emotion, or did you allow the emotion to influence how you would think, speak, and act?

#### 4. Thanksgiving and Forgiveness

Speak with God about all of this, thanking him for your responses that were in sync with your Christian calling, and asking forgiveness and healing when they were not.

#### 5. Renewal

Knowing that your emotions are only partially in your control. Reflect on what emotions you want to have tomorrow. If you could choose only one, what would it be. joy? peace? loving-kindness? courage? gratitude? Pick one and imagine yourself living out tomorrow with that emotion as your companion. Ask God to grant you the grace to be open to this emotion tomorrow.

# LAMENT

Kelly Dagley

**Address to God:** Lord God, Creator God, God of the brokenhearted, Rescuer of the oppressed, Healer of souls, The One with open arms for those who return, The God who has suffered and suffers with us,

- o Open a conversation with God
- o Who is God to you?

**Complaint:** We come to you as broken people. Many of us haven't told anyone about the wounds we carry. Many of us feel very, very alone. Some of us are angry, angry with loved ones, angry with those who have hurt us, angry with you, God. Hear our complaints now:

- o What is the problem?
- o Where does it hurt?
- o What have you lost?
- o Who have you lost?

**Confession of Trust:** Lord, you have been a refuge to many of us in the past. Please be that again. You have redeemed us, saved us, walked with us, loved us.

## Psalm 27:1

"The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
Whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;  
Of whom shall I be afraid?"

## John 8

Then Jesus gave the Twelve their chance: "Do you also want to leave?" Peter replied, "Master, to whom would we go? You have the words of real life, eternal life. We've already committed ourselves, confident that you are the Holy One of God."  
(John 8:67-69, The Message)

- o How has God rescued you in the past?
- o How is God good?
- o What do you know to be true about God?

**Petition:** "Where the cry is not voiced, heaven is not moved and history is not initiated." (Walter Bruggemann) Lord, we want to tell you right now, what we want you to do. God hear our desires, wants, and needs.

- o What do you want God to do?
- o What is your desire?
- o Voice your cry so heaven can be moved.

## Vow of Praise.

A Lament psalm usually ends with a vow of praise for God's rescue. Maybe you want to praise God for past rescue. Maybe you aren't ready to move to praise, that is OK. God knows if you can't. Take your time moving to praise.

Lord Jesus, those of us who can praise you for hearing us. We will always have the stories of how you have worked in our lives on our lips.

"But I trust in your steadfast love;

# PHYSICAL FORMATION

**PROBABLY THE LEAST UNDERSTOOD ASPECT OF PROGRESS IN CHRISTLIKENESS IS THE ROLE OF THE BODY IN THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.**

Dallas Willard



# PHYSICAL FORMATION

## PHYSICAL FORMATION

Physical formation = training our bodies with proper habits of sleep, eating, exercise & relaxation

### Definition

- The opportunity to **train our physical bodies with proper habits** of sleep, eating, exercise, and relaxation for the purpose of godliness

### 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

### DALLAS WILLARD

"So what we find, then, is that the body is the place of our direct power. It is the little "power pack" that God has assigned to us as the field of our freedom and development. Our lives depend upon our direction and management of it. But it has and acquires a "life of its own"--tendencies to behave without regard to our conscious intentions."

### Psalm 63:1

God—you're my God!  
I can't get enough of you!  
I've worked up such hunger and thirst for  
God,  
traveling across dry and weary deserts.

### Romans 12:1

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

### What's your story?

# BODY PRAYER

## **Giving your Body To God**

This exercise is an attempt to help those attempting to live in the reality of the kingdom of God every day to see our bodies in a different way. If God created our bodies, then he can and should be given control or dominion over each and every aspect of our bodies. This begins with a realization that God created each and every aspect of our being, as well as a spirit of gratefulness for that aspect of our bodies. While God created every part of us, we often live like God has nothing to do with our bodies. This exercise prompts us to give each part of our bodies back to God for his use, asking him to redeem it and make it effective for kingdom purposes. Allow at least 10-20 minutes or longer for the exercise.

## **Dallas Willard on The Body**

Philosopher and theologian Dallas Willard had much to say about the body and the part it plays in the kingdom of God. It is important to understand that our bodies are potential energy, available to us so that we may act (as persons with a "kingdom" or even in defiance to God), and our personalized "power packs." Our bodies take on a life of their own and in our fallen world, they usually take on a system of tendencies away from or against God. The body is inseparable in its functioning from the context of the surrounding world and its contents (1 John 2:16). The concept of the "flesh" in Scripture is often misunderstood. Flesh is not inherently bad – it is inherently good. The problem comes from living in a fallen world. The typical error in asceticism is to regard the flesh as evil – Christianity believes that natural reality, including the flesh, is good. Our desire is to see it redeemed. The great thing about a child is that they cannot hide their soul in their body. Adults learn to do this as they grow up. There is a lot of body hatred in the world today and this must be addressed.

[See Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (Chapter 7) & *Renovation of the Heart* (Chapter 9)]

## **Guidelines for the Exercise:**

1. Get in a comfortable position – either seated in a chair without arms or legs crossed or lying down
2. Close your eyes and eliminate as many distractions as possible
3. Take several deep breaths and be grateful to God for the air which fills your lungs and gives life
4. Treat this period of time as prayer – your life interacting with God's life
5. Slowly direct your attention to each part of your body – both internal and external – from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet.
6. You can use the Sign of the Cross, as well as the naming of "The Father, Son and Holy Spirit." Be as general or specific as you choose. Take as much time as necessary to "give that part of your body to God." Reflect on how each specific part has the opportunity for goodness. Each time you do this exercise, you will think of and discover different aspects of your body. The Sign of the Cross becomes shorthand as a continued dedication of your body to God.

Start by placing your hand on your head and pray,

### **"In the name of the Father."**

- Head – brain (mind, thoughts), eyes (sight), ears (hearing), mouth (speech), tongue (taste), nose (smell) Neck – throat, posture, thyroid gland (metabolism)

### **"In the name of the Son"**

- Abdomen – heart, lungs, stomach/bowels, liver, kidneys, spleen, etc.

### **"In the name of the Holy Spirit"**

- Arms – hands, fingers; Legs – feet, toes,
- Systems – circulatory, muscular, endocrine, skeletal, digestive, etc.

# PRAYER OF RECOLLECTION

## **1 – I realize there are limitations to what I can do as one human being. Identify any barriers to God's love in the area of our physical bodies.**

It's easy to push ourselves at the expense of our bodies. We feel weighed down by the demands on our time but we push on to accomplish as much as possible. We feel tired from the lack of sleep so we snack or gulp down caffeine in order to feel energized. Or we over-schedule our time since we feel bad saying no. We think, "if only I could finish things faster or had more time", "if only people would stop bugging me", or "if only people would take responsibility for their own stuff." Although we believe we cannot fulfill all the demands on our time, we don't always live that way. Our bodies are created with limits. Only God can meet all of our needs and the needs around us. Thankfully, we are not God.

Identifying the barriers to God's love in the area of our physical bodies may be difficult. The barriers may be subtle. Take time this week to sit in God's love reflecting on our physical limitations.

1. Take a moment to gauge what is going on with your body at the moment. Is your body feeling tired, exhausted, hungry, anxious, sore, irritated, relaxed, or whatever? Are there any ways you are not taking care of your body? Acknowledge that your body needs rest and care.
2. Look over the demands of your time and energy. Are you pushing yourself at work or school, in relationships, or with your looks in order to meet someone's expectations? On the other hand, are you slacking in any of these areas in response to someone's expectations? Are there any areas where you are people-pleasing? Acknowledge that you cannot meet everyone's wishes.
3. Reflect over your own ambitions and desires. We have limits and can only do so many tasks at once. Are there any ways you are holding on to control? Acknowledge that only God can meet all the needs that surround you.

## **2 – I realize that I am not just my name, my roles, and my abilities. Identify any barriers to God's love in the area of our false identities.**

"As long as we continue to live as if we are what we do, what we have, and what other people think about us, we will remain filled with judgments, opinions, evaluations, and condemnations. We will remain addicted to putting people and things in their "right" place." ~Henry Nouwen

We often find our value and identity in the wrong ways. We try to find our worth in our roles and our abilities. We may even define our worth by our sin, lack of self-control, or our failures. One can also seek affirmation from others to define how they feel about themselves. Do others consider us kind, strong, attractive, giving, sacrificial, angry, etc.? Our emotions and feeling can dictate our identity as well. Our roles: father, mother, brother, sister, friend, teacher, employee, employer, student, etc. can give us a temporary and false sense of meaning and value. However, none of these things are who we are; they are idols and false identities.

At our core, we are God's beloved created to be with Him for eternity. We are loved not because of who we are but because of who God is, Love. God calls us His dearly loved children, His beloved, His friend, His bride, and heirs to His kingdom.

1. Take time to confess your idols. Start by naming whatever you may have used to define yourself. Start with your abilities and success then move on to your failures and sins. Continue on by naming the qualities you place your value in like your kindness, beauty, strength, or whatever it may be that you want others to notice about you. Then confess how you have let your own emotions dictate your identity. Finally, go through all your roles in life and confess that they are not who you are.
2. Take time to affirm your true identity in Christ. Continue to spend time in Scripture, meditate on the verses and allow yourself to be embraced and loved by God. This may be the most difficult part of this section because you may still be holding on to those false identities and not allowing God to love you as He sees you, His beloved.

## **3 – Identify any barriers to being loved by God dealing with our view of God and how we've approached him.**

It's easy to be pulled in many different directions. We are busy people. Our time and energy may revolve around our kids' activities, our work or school deadlines, social demands, or family obligations. We try creative ways to fit in time with God. Or when we feel desperate, in need, or frustrated we'll turn to God. Our view of God and how we've approached Him may be the biggest barrier to being loved by God.

1. Are you engaged with God's heart and His work or are you asking Him to bless your work and life? What is your relationship with God like? Are you approaching God in a way that is less than He deserves? Confess any ways you've approached God less than He deserves. Confess any view of God that is false.
2. Practice this prayer of confession: I have not been praying to you as if you were really here holding me in love all day. I have not prayed to you as if you really love me as I am, your beloved. I have not sought your will or relied on you; I have relied on myself again all day. Please forgive me for my idolatry. Help me to hide in your loving embrace and seek your will and direction throughout the day. Help me become secure, abiding in that loved place with you, that I may go out from here to love and serve others without confusion about who I am or what you would have me do.
3. You may decide to meditate again in one or all of the previous passages.

# SABBATH

## Hebrews 4:1; 9-11

Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest is still open, let us take care that none of you should seem to have failed to reach it.

9 So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; 10 for those who enter God's rest also cease from their labors as God did from his. 11 Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs

## Mark 2:27

"The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath."

## Mark 2:27

8 Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work. 10 But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns.

## HENRI NOUWEN

---

The world says, "If you are not making good use of your time, you are useless. Jesus says: 'Come spend some useless time with me. If we can detach ourselves from the idea of the usefulness of prayer and the results of prayer, we become free to "waste" a precious hour with God in prayer. Gradually, we may find, our "useless" time will transform us, and everything around us will be different. Prayer is being unbusy with God instead of being busy with other things. To not be useful is to remind myself that if anything important or fruitful happens through prayer, it is God who achieves the result. So when I go into the day, I go with the conviction that God is the one who brings forth fruit in my work, and I do not have to act as though I am in control of things. I have to work hard; I have to do my task; I have to offer my best. But I can let go of the illusion of control and be detached from the result. At the end of the day I can prayerfully say that if something good has happened, God be praised.

## ABRAHAM HESCHEL

---

To the biblical mind... labor is the means toward an end, and the Sabbath as a day of rest, as a day of abstaining from toil, is not for the purpose of recovering one's lost strength and becoming fit for the forthcoming labor. The Sabbath is a day for the sake of life. Man is not a beast of burden, and the Sabbath is not for the purpose of enhancing the efficiency of his work. "Last in creation, first in intention," the Sabbath is "the end of creation of heaven and earth." The Sabbath is not for the sake of the weekdays; the weekdays are for the sake of Sabbath. It is not an interlude but the climax of living.

## Sabbath Rest

### The Night Before

- Consider the things that will nourish you and bring you life.
  - Worship, reading, a walk, the meals you'll eat, playing, etc.
- Grab a box or basket and put the things you won't need to take with you on Sunday.
  - Cell phone, credit cards, work or school project, laptop, etc.
- Invite God to guide you through your sabbath.
  - Light a candle - enjoy a meal with family and/or friends - go to bed early and pray that God gives you a deep refreshing sleep

### Sunday

- Awake gently. If possible don't use an alarm and allow yourself to wake up naturally.
  - Spend a moment with a simple prayer of gratitude for your rest and night before and welcome God into your day.
- Spend your day doing what you enjoy with God.

# RELATIONAL FORMATION

**"CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD IS NOT AN IDEAL WHICH WE MUST REALIZE; IT IS RATHER A REALITY CREATED BY GOD IN CHRIST IN WHICH WE MAY PARTICIPATE."**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



# RELATIONAL FORMATION

## RELATIONAL FORMATION

Relational formation = connecting with other people in authentic, loving relationships

### Definition

- The process of spiritual transformation that results from being deeply involved in **authentic and life-changing relationships** with other people.

## 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

## RONALD ROLHEISER

"We go to church so as not to be alone—alone in our suffering, alone in the everydayness of our lives, alone in the important passages of our lives...We go to church to tell people we love them, and hopefully, to hear them tell us the same thing."



## DAVID A. SEAMANDS

"We talk a lot about being honest with ourselves and with God. And we sincerely – sometimes desperately – try to do this in our times of Bible reading and prayer. But the kind of honesty and self-knowledge, which will bring about lasting changes in our lives almost always requires another person. It is when we disclose our true, private selves to someone else that we fully come to know ourselves for real. Down deep we may dimly perceive the truth about our real selves, yet we go on denying or covering it with our superselves – even in prayer. However, once we have actually put the truth into words and shared with another, it becomes increasingly difficult to continue deceiving ourselves."

# “ONE-ANOTHER”

Spend some time committed to one of the ‘one anothers’ above. Picture what practicing this “one another” will cost you in time, money, and self-indulgence. At the end of each day notice how you lived and didn’t live your “one another”. Seek God’s grace to continue to practice this “one another” out of the overflow of his Spirit.

**John 13:34** – A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

**Romans 12:10** – Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.

**Romans 12:16** – Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

**Romans 14:13** – Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother’s way.

**Romans 15:5** – Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus. (NASB)

**Romans 15:7** – Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

**Romans 15:14** – I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.

**1 Corinthians 1:10** – I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

**Galatians 5:13** – You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

**Galatians 6:2** – Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ. (NASB)

**Ephesians 4:32** – Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

**Ephesians 5:19** – Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,

**Ephesians 5:21** – Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

**Colossians 3:13** – Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

**Colossians 3:16** – Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

**1 Thessalonians 4:18** – Therefore comfort one another with these words. (NASB)

**1 Thessalonians 5:11** – Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

**Hebrews 10:24** – And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

**James 5:16** – Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

**1 Peter 4:9** – Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

# MISSIONAL FORMATION

**"THE BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF SALVATION IS THAT OUR LIVES BECOME SWEEPED UP INTO SOMETHING LARGER AND GREATER THAN OURSELVES, INTO GOD'S PURPOSES FOR THE WORLD. IN OTHER WORDS, THE RECEIVING OF SALVATION AND THE CALL TO MISSION ARE NOT TO BE CONCEIVED SEQUENTIALLY, AS IF ONE FOLLOWED THE OTHER. RATHER, TO RECEIVE SALVATION IS, TO BE CALLED INTO SOMETHING LARGER AND GREATER THAN WE ARE, TO BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN GOD'S SAVING PURPOSE AND PLAN FOR THE WORLD. THAT IS WHY THE GOSPEL IS PRIMARILY ABOUT GOD, AND ONLY SECONDARILY ABOUT US."**

Inagrace Dietrich



# MISSIONAL FORMATION

Missional formation = focusing our passions and gifts on the mission of God & his kingdom

## Definition

- The process whereby God focuses your heart, passion, gifts, experiences, and energies in a direction that intersects with the mission of God and his kingdom.

## BIBLICAL SNAPSHOT

### Genesis 1

...31 God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

### Genesis 2:19

So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

### Genesis 3:9

But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"

### Genesis 12:2

"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing."

### Jeremiah 29:7

Seek the *shalom* of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its *shalom* you will find your *shalom*.

### John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and lived among us

### Mark 1:14-15

Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"

### John 20:21

"Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

### Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

### John 5:17&19

"My Father is still working, and I also am working." "Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise."

# MISSIONAL FORMATION

## **Luke 10:1-12**

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road.

Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you.

Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house.

Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.' I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.

# STATIO

The monastics have a practice called **statio**. It's the simple practice of stopping before and after any new task or movement. It's a pause for a moment to be present to what God has done, is doing, and is about to do.

Missional Formation is all about God's Kingdom, His activity, and work in our world. We start with the assumption that God is present and at work before we ever show up. Statio is an act of our will. It directs our intention and attention to God. It also aids in our discernment of God's activity. We practice paying attention and searching for God in every place, person, and conversation.

Simply pause for a moment and reflect on the gifts and presence of God in the last activity you participated in, and pray that you will be attentive to God's presence in the next moments.

JOANN CHITTISTER

"If I am present to this child before I dress her, then the dressing becomes an act of creation. If I am present to my spouse in the living room, then marriage becomes an act of divine communication. If I am present to the flower before I cut it, then life becomes precious. If I am present to the time of prayer before I pray, then prayer becomes the juncture of the human with the Divine. We have learned well in our time to go through life nonstop. Now it is time to learn to collect ourselves from time to time so that God can touch us in the most hectic of moments."

# RHYTHM OF LIFE

**"IF YOU WANT TO IDENTIFY ME, ASK ME NOT WHERE I LIVE OR WHAT I LIKE TO EAT, OR HOW I COMB MY HAIR BUT ASK ME WHAT I AM LIVING FOR, IN DETAIL AND ASK ME, WHAT I THINK IS KEEPING ME FROM LIVING FULLY FOR THE THING I WANT TO LIVE FOR?"**

Thomas Merton



# RHYTHM OF LIFE

## Putting together of Rhythm or Rule of Life

A Rhythm of Life simply gives structure, patterns, and practices that are a regular routine and enable one to welcome and respond to Jesus as he seeks to form and shape our life both in quality and character.

I've changed the word "rule" to "rhythm" because "rule" can seem strict and constraining. When monastics used the word in Latin, the reference was "trellis" or the idea of regular rhythm. A trellis is used on a vine to lift it off the ground so it could bear more fruit. A rule or rhythm of life then refers to the structural support that helps us organize our life around growing in Christ. John 15:1-8 provides a beautiful picture of us as the vine growing in Christ.

## KEN SHIGEMATSU

---

"Those who flourish in their lives with God have a Spirit-initiated rule of life, a rhythm of practices that enables them to welcome and respond to Jesus." (God in My Everything: How Ancient Rhythms Helps Busy People Enjoy God.)

## A Rhythm of Life is a means to an end, not the end itself.

Dallas Willard talks about how we need a "curriculum for Christ-likeness." His VIM model can be a helpful framework as you start to develop your own. It's Vision, Intention, and Means.

### Vision:

- God and who he is
- The Kingdom of God and your life in it
- For growing in character

### Intention:

- To actually fulfill the vision
- We fall because we never intend to
- To be Jesus' student, disciple, apprentice
- You have to believe it is the most important thing in the world for you
- Decision - not willpower

### Means:

- For realizing the vision
- For following through with the intention
- Spiritual disciplines

A Rhythm of Life seeks to answer two questions:

- a. Whom do I want to be?
- b. How do I want to live?

## Synthesized

How do I want to live so I can be whom I want to be?

(Ruth Haley Barton, Sacred Rhythms)

# RHYTHM OF LIFE

It's really important when crafting your rule or rhythm that you do a couple of things.

**Be Holistic** - Pay attention to all the areas of formation:

- Spiritual
- Missional
- Relational
- Mental
- Physical
- Emotional

**It takes time**

You should explore a variety of disciplines so that you can get a sense of their meaning for your life and how you might incorporate them realistically into your life. This takes time and experimentation so that you can arrange them in a way that fits your life.

Don't just practice them once but at least 6 weeks.

**It's Personal**

Your rule/rhythm is very personal. Taking into account your:

- Your Personality
- Spiritual Pathways
- Season of Life
- Sin
- Work and Homelife
- Where God is trying to stretch you

This means it needs to be realistic based on your stage of life. We are not monks and nuns. It also needs to take into account whether you are in a place of giving or are you in need of receiving so you can fill up to give back out.



Balanced with disciplines that come naturally and stretch us.  
Look at your Timeline and ask, "What are the easiest ways for you?"

**Flexible and it's a living document.**

Don't become rigid and legalistic  
Reflect and evaluate every 6 months.

It's all a gift from God, God's Grace.

Dallas Willard said,  
*"Saints burn way more grace than sinners ever could."*

Grace is God doing for us what we cannot do on our own.

# RHYTHM OF LIFE

## **Writing a Rule of Life**

What are your minimum daily/weekly/monthly/yearly requirements for ongoing spiritual transformation?

## **Questions to work through:**

- What do you want from God? Where do you want to change? Where do you feel powerless to change? Ask for grace, for God to help you with what you cannot do through effort alone.
- What practices will I engage in on a daily basis? Weekly? Monthly? Yearly?
- Where will I practice these disciplines?
- What time of the day/week/month/year?
- What disciplines will I practice in community and how will I practice them?
- When and where do you feel most connected to God? What disciplines do you connect with based on your personality type and spiritual pathway? Pay attention to the experiences, practices, and relationships that draw you towards God. Incorporate these in your rhythm.
- What practices are more difficult but you sense God inviting you to practice for growth?
- Are there any particular practices needed for a specific need, sin in your life, or negative pattern?
- What are you currently doing to realize your goals and longings? Which of these things help and hinder your spiritual transformation?

|                           |                  |                  |                   |               |                 |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <b>Vision</b>             |                  |                  |                   |               |                 |                  |
| <b>Holistic Formation</b> | <b>Spiritual</b> | <b>Emotional</b> | <b>Relational</b> | <b>Mental</b> | <b>Physical</b> | <b>Missional</b> |
| <b>Daily</b>              |                  |                  |                   |               |                 |                  |
| <b>Weekly</b>             |                  |                  |                   |               |                 |                  |
| <b>Monthly</b>            |                  |                  |                   |               |                 |                  |
| <b>Annually</b>           |                  |                  |                   |               |                 |                  |

# HOLISTIC FORMATION ASSESSMENT

**Directions:** Read the following questions and answer each one as it relates to you personally using the following scale:

0 = never; 1 = rarely; 2 = sometimes; 3 = usually; 4 = frequently; 5 = always

## Spiritual Formation

- \_\_\_ 1. I feel close, connected, and loved by God.
- \_\_\_ 2. I experience God's grace touching all areas of my life.
- \_\_\_ 3. I spend time in solitude and silence to be with God.
- \_\_\_ 4. I read the Bible and in it find practical wisdom and insights for life.
- \_\_\_ 5. I participate in spiritual disciplines/practices/habits (e.g., fasting, meditation, etc.)
- \_\_\_ 6. I desire to live my life as Jesus would live my life if he were I.
- \_\_\_ 7. I spend time with a spiritual director (a person trained to help me see where God is at work in my life).
- \_\_\_ 8. I intentionally make space in my life and schedule for God.
- \_\_\_ 9. I spend time in prayer both talking and listening to God.
- \_\_\_ 10. I live my life with confidence that the "spiritual" touches every area or dimension.

**Spiritual Formation Total** \_\_\_\_\_

## Emotional Formation

- \_\_\_ 1. I am aware how my family of origin has a significant impact on my thoughts and behaviors.
- \_\_\_ 2. I would see a counselor/therapist when a crisis or issue arises in which I need emotional/mental help.
- \_\_\_ 3. I have a clear understanding of my identity or who I am as a person.
- \_\_\_ 4. I do what is necessary to keep from being controlled by addictions.
- \_\_\_ 5. I am cautious not to "use" other people to accomplish my own purposes.
- \_\_\_ 6. I am aware when I feel emotions such as depression, anxiety, fear, or anger and know how to handle them.
- \_\_\_ 7. I believe that insight into the deep parts of my heart and soul helps me to live a full and meaningful life.
- \_\_\_ 8. I express my feelings and convictions balanced with consideration for the thoughts and feelings of others.
- \_\_\_ 9. I am involved in play and leisure as essential to my overall health and well-being.
- \_\_\_ 10. I believe that failure might be a method God can use for my success.

**Emotional Formation Total** \_\_\_\_\_

# HOLISTIC FORMATION ASSESSMENT

## Relational Formation

- \_\_\_ 1. I have one or more friends who know everything about me.
- \_\_\_ 2. I have friends who would do whatever it takes to spend time with me when needed.
- \_\_\_ 3. I talk with friends about important matters and deeply personal issues in my life.
- \_\_\_ 4. I spend time with a person I would consider a "spiritual friend/companion" discussing spiritual matters.
- \_\_\_ 5. I believe that God's attributes (e.g., love, mercy, forgiveness) are communicated to us through people.
- \_\_\_ 6. I confess wrong things I have done, failures, weaknesses, and so on to a friend or other safe person.
- \_\_\_ 7. I am an active part of a church/faith community.
- \_\_\_ 8. I have opinions, perspectives, goals, values, and so on that are unique from the people around me.
- \_\_\_ 9. I go directly to the person to deal with an issue whenever I have a conflict.
- \_\_\_ 10. I have experienced growth and change in my life because of the relationships I have.

**Relational Formation Total** \_\_\_\_\_

## Physical Formation

- \_\_\_ 1 I exercise regularly (e.g. at least 3-4 times a week).
- \_\_\_ 2. I practice a day of Sabbath rest once a week.
- \_\_\_ 3. I sleep at least 8-9 hours a night.
- \_\_\_ 4. I examine my life and work load to monitor the amount of stress I'm experiencing.
- \_\_\_ 5. I know and am able to perform relaxation exercises (e.g., deep breathing, meditation, stretching).
- \_\_\_ 6. I eat nutrient dense foods and a balance of lean proteins, complex carbohydrates, and healthy fats.
- \_\_\_ 7. I am the proper weight for someone of my age and stature.
- \_\_\_ 8. I have a hobby, sport, or recreational pursuit in which I participate.
- \_\_\_ 9. I desire to have a body that is healthy and strong so that I can fulfill the purpose/calling God has for me.
- \_\_\_ 10. I exercise with a friend, workout partner, or personal trainer.

**Physical Formation Total** \_\_\_\_\_

# HOLISTIC FORMATION ASSESSMENT

## Mental Formation

- \_\_\_ 1. I can see how my thinking can actually change my brain for health or un-health.
- \_\_\_ 2. I am aware that what I am like is based on what is on my mind.
- \_\_\_ 3. I am always open to “repenting” of wrong thoughts (i.e., changing my thinking about my thinking)
- \_\_\_ 4. I memorize Scripture so that I have God’s wisdom readily available to me.
- \_\_\_ 5. I feel effective at dealing with temptations because of my ability to “put my mind on things above.”
- \_\_\_ 6. I am aware how my thinking governs my feelings.
- \_\_\_ 7. I am careful to ensure that no thought in my mind goes unchecked.
- \_\_\_ 8. It is enjoyable for me to “practice the presence of God” by putting my mind on God as much as I can.
- \_\_\_ 9. I can see how what I think about others is determined by what I think about God.
- \_\_\_ 10. I have a mentor or sage who helps me be reflective about my thinking.

**Mental Formation Total** \_\_\_\_\_

## Missional/Vocational Formation

- \_\_\_ 1. I intentionally look for opportunities to bring the gospel of God’s kingdom to others in words and actions.
- \_\_\_ 2. I am aware that I am actively living in the kingdom of God in my daily life.
- \_\_\_ 3. I practice hospitality in my home and life.
- \_\_\_ 4. I see myself as someone who is sent by God to the people I live and work with each day.
- \_\_\_ 5. I seek the wisdom and insight of a personal/life coach to refine my vocational passions, skills, and abilities.
- \_\_\_ 6. I read, study, or observe to understand the changes shaping the culture and community in which I live.
- \_\_\_ 7. I live the mission Jesus gave his followers in Matthew 28:18-20 to make disciples.
- \_\_\_ 8. I am involved in some form of compassion-based ministry (e.g., helping the poor, social justice, etc.).
- \_\_\_ 9. I am attempting to discern and participate in God’s mission in my local context (e.g., neighborhood, school).
- \_\_\_ 10. I have a desire to be both biblically, theologically, and culturally informed.

**Missional Formation Total** \_\_\_\_\_

## Scoring Suggestions

- 40-50** This is probably an area of strength or one where you have extensive experience
- 30-40** You are doing pretty well in this area and have some experience here
- 20-30** You have some focused work you can do in this area
- Below 20** This is an area of weakness that needs your immediate attention

**- Formation or De/Formation**

**+ Formation Re/Formation**

