

SPIRITUAL FORMATION FRAMEWORK - INGREDIENTS ASSIGNMENT:
A BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION THROUGH
GRUNBLATT.COM

A Paper

Submitted to Dr. Matthew Vander Wiele

of the

Liberty University – School of Divinity

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Course

Spiritual Formation in the Digital Age: CLCM-520

in the Division of Christian Leadership

Sarah Kimball Grunblatt

ThM, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2025

MPH, LSU Health Sciences Center - New Orleans, 2022

MS, University of New Orleans, 2020

MS, University of New Orleans, 2020

MEd, William Carey University, 2016

MEd, William Carey University, 2015

MA, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008

BS, Louisiana State University, 2007

July 6, 2025

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Part 1. Spiritual Formation Framework: Foundations	3
1.1 Biblical and Theological Foundation for Spiritual Formation	4
1.2 Salient Issues in a Free, Non-Interactive Blog Ministry.....	6
1.3 Exegetical Analysis of Biblical Texts	9
1.4 Proposed Framework for Digital Spiritual Formation.....	12
Part 2. Spiritual Formation Framework: Ingredients	12
2.1 Necessary Ingredients That Facilitate and Promote Spiritual Growth	13
2.2 Assessment or Evaluation Strategy for Determining Growth.....	16
2.3 The Role of the Christian Community in the Spiritual Formation Process.....	18
Conclusion	20
Bibliography	21

Introduction

In an era where digital platforms shape much of daily life, including spiritual pursuits, the need for intentional frameworks to foster authentic Christian growth has never been more pressing. Spiritual formation is the lifelong process by which Christians grow into the likeness of Christ through the Holy Spirit's transformative work. It is guided by Scripture and nurtured in community, as described in Romans 8:29: "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son,"¹ which remains central to the believer's journey. This paper develops a biblical and theological framework for spiritual formation tailored to the digital ministry of Grunblatt.com, an ad-free, non-interactive blog dedicated to providing biblical answers for Christian living.² Drawing from the English Standard Version of Scripture, the blog addresses contemporary issues such as leadership, gossip, personal agency, mRNA technology, politics, and cultural phenomena like movies, weaving in relevant verses to demonstrate the Bible's timeless relevance and inspire curiosity about Jesus. Its purpose is not to replace community but to spark a desire for deeper engagement in local churches or personal discussions with fellow believers, bridging online exploration with embodied faith practices.

Structured in two parts, this framework first establishes foundational principles in Part 1, including biblical and theological underpinnings, salient issues in digital ministry, exegetical analyses of key Scriptures (2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 12:2, and Hebrews 10:24–25), and a proposed model for digital spiritual formation. Part 2 builds upon these by exploring essential

¹ All Scripture references will be from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise indicated. Crossway, *Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001).

² Sarah Kimball Grunblatt, "Grunblatt.com: Biblical Answers for Christian Living," Grunblatt.com, accessed July 16, 2025, <https://grunblatt.com>.

ingredients for growth, assessment strategies, and the indispensable role of Christian community, integrating insights from scholars like Lowe and Lowe (2018) on ecological faith formation in online spaces.³ Ultimately, this paper equips Grunblatt.com to navigate digital distractions while promoting holistic maturation, aligning with the exhortation in 2 Peter 3:18 : "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."⁴

Part 1. Spiritual Formation Framework: Foundations

In digital contexts, where believers seek guidance online, the spiritual formation process requires strategies to navigate unique challenges and opportunities. As such, Grunblatt.com is an ad-free digital blog without a comment section (to prevent conflicts) that is free to access online from anywhere.⁵ It uses the English Standard Version Bible to maximize understanding and answers questions about Christian living, such as biblical leadership, overcoming gossip, and exercising personal agency. The purpose is to spark curiosity about Jesus, encouraging readers to seek out their local church or other Christians for further discussion. This paper presents a biblical and theological framework for spiritual formation tailored to Grunblatt.com's audience.⁶ It outlines a foundation for spiritual maturation, identifies salient issues in digital ministry, and provides an exegetical analysis of three Scriptures. The framework emphasizes Scripture-centered content, accessibility, and offline application to foster spiritual growth in a distraction-filled digital world.

³ Stephen D. Lowe and Mary E. Lowe, *Ecologies of Faith in a Digital Age: Spiritual Growth through Online Education* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018).

⁴ Grunblatt, "Grunblatt.com."

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

1.1 Biblical and Theological Foundation for Spiritual Formation

Biblical and theological foundations for spiritual formation include transformation through the Holy Spirit, renewal of the mind, and communal encouragement.

Transformation through the Spirit

The biblical foundation for spiritual formation rests on God's purpose to conform believers to Christ's image (Rom. 8:29). A key principle is Spirit-led transformation, as seen in 2 Corinthians 3:18: "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." This highlights the Holy Spirit's role in enabling believers to reflect Christ's character. Grunblatt.com supports this by offering Christ-focused answers, such as posts on humble leadership or edifying speech, guiding readers to behold Christ amidst digital distractions.⁷⁸

Renewal of the Mind

Another principle is the renewal of the mind, as instructed in Romans 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." This calls believers to align their thoughts with God's will, resisting worldly patterns like relativism (i.e., truth is subjective and/or related only to a particular context) prevalent online. Grunblatt.com facilitates this through Scripture-based insights, such as posts on personal agency that encourage

⁷ Grunblatt, "Grunblatt.com."

⁸ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002).

standing firm in Christ's freedom, fostering spiritual maturity through discernment.⁹ Every post weaves scripture throughout to show that the Bible is the living and active Word of God, unchanging and ready and able to address all questions in today's modern world of infinite ideologies, beliefs, and worldviews.

Communal Encouragement

Community is essential for spiritual growth, as emphasized in Hebrews 10:24–25: “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” Though Grunblatt.com lacks interactive features, it encourages readers to apply teachings in local churches, small groups, or with Christian friends or family, promoting embodied (in-person) fellowship.¹⁰ Theologically, spiritual formation is a divine-human partnership requiring grace and discipline.¹¹ As a free, ad-free resource, Grunblatt.com removes access barriers, enabling diverse readers to engage with Scripture on topics like mRNA technology (e.g., “Why Christians Should Question mRNA Vaccines”), men & boys (e.g., “Raising Boys to Be Their Wife's Hero: A Biblical Blueprint”), or politics (e.g., “Faith in the Public Square”), aligning with the call to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18).¹²

⁹ Grunblatt, “Grunblatt.com.”

¹⁰ Grunblatt, “Grunblatt.com.”

¹¹ Willard, *Renovation*.

¹² Grunblatt, “Grunblatt.com.”

1.2 Salient Issues in a Free, Non-Interactive Blog Ministry

Salient issues in a free, non-interactive blog ministry include digital distractions, engagement without interaction, content discernment, and purity of motive that encourage and build up to the ultimate goal of embodied faith in everyday life.

Digital Distraction

Online environments are saturated with distractions, from social media to streaming platforms, challenging believers' focus.¹³ Most sites also generate revenue using advertising software to track data. Grunblatt.com counters this with concise, Scripture-focused posts completely free of ads or sponsorships. Accountability and support for the ministry rest solely with God.¹⁴ For example, the post "Why Does Evil Exist?" based on Romans 8:28 and Genesis 50:20 uses a clear structure—topic, question, answer, application—to direct readers to Christ's example, prioritizing spiritual formation amidst digital noise.¹⁵ Another post states, "Has money ever felt like a trap? How has faith helped break free? Let's keep the conversation going."¹⁶

Engagement Without Interaction

The absence of a comment section limits engagement, a common feature in digital communities.¹⁷ Grunblatt.com addresses this with offline prompts, such as "Next time you feel overwhelmed, hum 'Do a Little Good' and let Scripture guide you. Take one small step to love

¹³ Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

¹⁴ Grunblatt, "Grunblatt.com."

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ John Dyer, *From the Garden to the City: The Redeeming and Corrupting Power of Technology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2011).

your neighbor, trusting that, as the song says, ‘a little good’ can change the world. What’s one small act of kindness you’ve done or received lately? How does Scripture inspire you to ‘do a little good?’”¹⁸ Another is “Ready to Begin? You’ve got the roadmap. Take that step—call on Jesus, explore a church, and let the Roman Road guide you to salvation. Questions? A local church or pastor can help tailor this to your path. Begin (or return to) your journey of walking with Christ.”¹⁹ Many posts also offer additional resources, such as books by Christian authors, help resources, and reputable sources to support the content or allow readers to fact-check. This encourages embodied connections and real-life action, fostering spiritual growth through real-world accountability, aligning with communal encouragement and relationships.

Content Discernment

The internet exposes readers to conflicting ideologies, like materialism, hindering spiritual formation.²⁰ Grunblatt.com deliberately uses ESV Scriptures to provide trustworthy answers in an easy-to-understand translation, helping readers “test everything; hold fast what is good” (1 Thess. 5:21).²¹ A post on personal agency (Gal. 5:1) equips readers to discern God’s will amid cultural pressures, promoting a renewed mind.²² Another states, “So, let’s take inspiration from Barbie and, more importantly, from God’s Word. ***Dream big, step boldly into your callings, and trust that the One who created you will guide you to be everything He***

¹⁸ Grunblatt, “Grunblatt.com.”

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Heidi A. Campbell, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

²¹ Grunblatt, “Grunblatt.com.”

²² Ibid.

designed you to be. What role or dream do you feel God calling you to pursue? Let's encourage one another to walk in His purpose"²³ (from "Barbie is a Doctor & a Senator & a Lawyer & a Nobel Prize Winner"). Numerous scriptures are woven throughout each post.

Purity of Motive

As a free, ad-free resource, Grunblatt.com prioritizes ministry over profit, enhancing trust.²⁴ Trust is the foundation of all relationships; without it, nothing else is possible. For example, one post ends with "Together, let's live out Acts 20:35, showing Louisiana and beyond that it is truly more blessed to give than to receive. As Hebrews 13:16 encourages, 'Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.' Join us in transforming lives, one scholarship at a time."²⁶ At the end of each post, readers are invited to email the author with questions. This requires creative visibility strategies, like social media shares or church partnerships, to reach readers without compromising its mission, ensuring it remains a faithful and trustworthy tool for spiritual formation.

Embodied Faith

Digital resources risk disconnecting believers from practices like prayer or service.²⁷ Grunblatt.com bridges this by encouraging offline application, such as serving others (Eph. 2:10).²⁸ One post explains, "Louisiana's health rankings (50th in the U.S. in 2022) tell a tough

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Grunblatt, "Grunblatt.com."

²⁵ Derek J. Schuurman, *Shaping a Digital World: Faith, Culture, and Computer Technology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019).

²⁶ Grunblatt, "Grunblatt.com."

²⁷ Campbell, *Digital Religion*.

²⁸ Grunblatt, "Grunblatt.com."

story, but they don't define us. Our food, resilience, and communities do. Roux & Renewal is more than a cooking class—it's a movement to make healthy eating affordable, accessible, and joyful. By teaching skills, sharing meals, and strengthening bonds, we're tackling the root causes of poor health—poverty, isolation, and lack of resources—while honoring the flavors that make Louisiana home. As we share these meals, we're reminded of 1 Corinthians 10:31 : 'So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.' Want to join us? Email us at Acts2035@Grunblatt.com.²⁹ Watch for flyers at your local YMCA, church, or school, or follow #RouxAndRenewal on X. Let's stir up health and community, Louisiana style."³⁰ Other posts encourage personal reflection. All content integrates digital learning with real-world faith.

1.3 Exegetical Analysis of Biblical Texts

Beholding Christ through Content (2 Corinthians 3:18)

In 2 Corinthians 3, Paul contrasts the old covenant's fading glory with the new covenant's transformative power. The verse states, "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." The Greek *katoptrizomenoi* (beholding as in a mirror) implies active contemplation, while *metamorphoumetha* (are being transformed) indicates a Spirit-led process. Grunblatt.com facilitates this through posts like one on leadership (John 13:14–15), contrasting worldly ambition with Christ's humility, or gossip (Prov. 16:28), highlighting Christ's love. Reflection questions, like "What choice has shaped your faith or

²⁹ Grunblatt, "Grunblatt.com."

³⁰ Ibid.

character? Celebrate the moments that draw us closer to who God calls us to be,” prompt contemplation and foster transformation.³¹³²

Renewing the Mind through Scripture (Romans 12:2)

Romans 12 urges believers to live as living sacrifices. The verse instructs, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” The Greek *metamorphousthe* (transformed) and *anakainōsis* (renewal) suggest reorientation. The “world” (*aion*) includes online cultural patterns. Grunblatt.com fosters renewal with posts like one on personal agency (Gal. 5:1), encouraging freedom in Christ.³³ For instance, “‘But you’re the creator. Don’t you control me?’ Barbie’s question, answered by Ruth’s tender wisdom, captures the soul of the Barbie movie and echoes biblical truths about creation and freedom. It reminds us that, like Barbie, we are crafted with purpose by a loving Creator who grants us autonomy to shape our lives. As we reflect on this scene, let’s celebrate the gift of free will, trust in God’s guidance, and embrace the unique stories we’re called to live, knowing that ‘we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works’ (Ephesians 2:10). So, next time you spot a Barbie doll, think of Ruth’s words—and God’s. What story is He inviting you to write?”³⁴ Posts generally explore real-world situations, weave in scripture to renew the mind, and encourage

³¹ Willard, *Renovation*.

³² Grunblatt, “Grunblatt.com.”

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

offline action. A post on gossip (Prov. 16:28), for example, urges speaking life-giving words offline, promoting a renewed mind.³⁵

Encouraging Offline Community (Hebrews 10:24–25)

Hebrews 10 encourages perseverance through communal support. The passage urges, “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” The Greek *paroxysmos* (stir up) implies proactive encouragement. Grunblatt.com encourages offline fellowship with prompts like “The WWJD movement may have started as a catchy phrase, but its essence is timeless.”³⁶ By expanding it to include what Jesus would see, say, and feel, we gain a richer understanding of how to live as His disciples. These questions aren’t just for personal reflection—they’re a call to transform how we interact with the world. In EVERY moment, let’s strive to see with His eyes, speak with His voice, feel with His heart, and act in His love. What situation in your life could benefit from asking these questions today? Take a step in faith, and let Jesus’ example guide you.”³⁷ Furthermore, a post on leadership (Phil. 2:3–4) concludes, “What do you think? Do you see echoes of Rome’s leadership failures today?”³⁸ ensuring digital content supports embodied community.³⁹

³⁵ Campbell, *Digital Religion*.

³⁶ Grunblatt, “Grunblatt.com.”

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Dyer, *From the Garden to the City*.

1.4 Proposed Framework for Digital Spiritual Formation

The framework for spiritual formation through Grunblatt.com integrates biblical principles.⁴⁰ First, Scripture-centered content uses the ESV translation, like Proverbs 16:28 for gossip, to renew minds (Rom. 12:2). Second, a distraction-free design maintains an ad-free platform to focus on Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). Third, offline community prompts, like “Discuss John 13:14–15 in a Bible study or with a Christian friend,” foster personal fellowship (Heb. 10:24–25). Fourth, discernment guidance embedded in posts equips readers to evaluate ideologies (1 Thess. 5:21). Fifth, embodied application suggestions link to practices like serving (Eph. 2:10). Finally, most posts follow a topic, question, answer, application structure with scripture woven throughout, and visibility relies on organic sharing, preserving trust and the ad-free ethos.⁴¹

Part 2. Spiritual Formation Framework: Ingredients

Building upon the foundational elements of spiritual formation outlined in Part 1 (revised here for coherence), this section expands the framework by identifying key ingredients that facilitate spiritual growth in maturing Christians. Spiritual formation is the ongoing process of being conformed to the image of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. As Romans 8:29 states, “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” This assignment integrates necessary ingredients for growth, strategies for assessing progress, and the vital role of the Christian community. These components are drawn from scriptural truths and supported by academic insights, ensuring a holistic model for discipleship.

⁴⁰ Grunblatt, “Grunblatt.com.”

⁴¹ Ibid.

In applying this framework personally, my ministry context is Grunblatt.com, a free-to-access, ad-free, and conflict-free (no comments section) blog titled Biblical Answers for Christian Living.⁴² The blog uses Scripture to answer life questions and discuss culture—such as movies (e.g., “Correction to Mean Girls 2024: Sex Cancer DOES Exist”)—with the hope that readers will be inspired to talk with Christian friends and/or attend church for deeper learning and fellowship. This digital outreach aligns with spiritual formation by encouraging obedience through service and pointing individuals toward community engagement. Drawing from Lowe and Lowe (2018), who propose an ecological model of faith formation in digital spaces, the blog functions as a “nested ecology” where online interactions foster interconnected growth, unbounded by time and space, enabling spiritual maturation through mediated presence.⁴³

2.1 Necessary Ingredients That Facilitate and Promote Spiritual Growth

For maturing Christians, spiritual growth is not accidental but requires intentional engagement with specific “ingredients” that nourish the soul and foster maturity. These elements act as catalysts, enabling believers to move from infancy in faith to deeper conformity with Christ. Expanding on this, Lowe and Lowe (2018) emphasize an ecological approach, where growth occurs within interconnected systems—physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual—mirroring biblical motifs like the Garden of Eden's perfect ecology.⁴⁴ In digital contexts like my blog, these ingredients can be cultivated online, creating environments where faith flourishes through reciprocal exchanges.

⁴² Grunblatt, “Grunblatt.com.”

⁴³ Lowe & Lowe, *Ecologies*.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Central Ingredients: Faith, Hope, and Love (1 Corinthians 13:13; Matthew 5:13-14)

Central to these ingredients are faith, hope, and love, as highlighted in 1 Corinthians 13:13 : “So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” Faith flows from the Father into Christians, grounding them in divine truth and enabling trust in God's promises. Hope flows from believers toward an eternity with Jesus, providing endurance and vision for the future. Love, empowered by the Holy Spirit, flows from believers outward toward the world as they serve others like Jesus—becoming His hands and feet, and acting as salt and light in a dark world (Matt. 5:13-14: “You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world”).

First Ingredient: Immersion in God's Word (1 Peter 2:2; Romans 12:2)

First, immersion in God's Word is foundational. The Bible serves as spiritual food, providing nourishment for growth, as emphasized in 1 Peter 2:2 : “Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.” Regular study, meditation, and application of Scripture equip Christians to discern truth and resist deception. This ingredient promotes maturity by building knowledge of Christ and aligning thoughts with divine wisdom, as in Romans 12:2 . In the context of Grunblatt.com, blog posts dissect cultural elements like movies through a biblical lens (e.g., “Mean Girls 2024: A Fetch Musical with Biblical Wisdom”), encouraging readers to renew their minds and apply Scripture to everyday life, thus integrating this ingredient digitally.⁴⁵

Second Ingredient: Prayer and Communion with God (James 1:12)

Second, prayer and communion with God are essential. Prayer fosters intimacy with the Father, allowing the Holy Spirit to transform hearts and renew minds. It includes adoration,

⁴⁵ Grunblatt, “Grunblatt.com.”

confession, thanksgiving, and supplication, creating a rhythm that sustains spiritual vitality. Coupled with disciplines like fasting and solitude, prayer helps believers persevere through trials, viewing them as opportunities for refinement, as James 1:12 affirms: “Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.” Lowe and Lowe (2018) extend this to digital ecologies, where online prayer prompts or reflective posts can facilitate communion, demonstrating that spiritual connections transcend physical presence.⁴⁶

Third Ingredient: Obedience and Service to Others (Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Peter 3:18)

Third, obedience and service to others propel growth. Maturing Christians demonstrate faith through actions, bearing the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Gal. 5:22-23). Service in ministry or daily life cultivates humility and dependence on God, as seen in 2 Peter 3:18. In my context, this includes maintaining Grunblatt.com, where Scripture addresses life questions and cultural topics, inspiring readers toward Christ-centered living and service.⁴⁷ Additional practices, such as worship and stewardship of time and resources, reinforce these ingredients, ensuring holistic development. Furthermore, incorporating Lowe and Lowe's (2018) insights, digital service—such as blogging—creates “exchanges of energy” through reciprocal interactions, even if mediated, fostering moral and spiritual ecologies.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Lowe & Lowe, *Ecologies*.

⁴⁷ Grunblatt, “Grunblatt.com.”

⁴⁸ Lowe & Lowe, *Ecologies*.

Fourth Ingredient: Engagement in Online Ecologies (John 15:1-11, especially verse 5)

A fourth ingredient, emerging from digital-age considerations, is engagement in online ecologies. Lowe and Lowe (2018) argue that online platforms can form valid communities for spiritual growth, using biblical imagery like vines and branches (John 15:1-11).⁴⁹ For instance, “I am the vine; you are the branches.”⁵⁰ Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). On Grunblatt.com, readers engage with content that prompts abiding in Christ digitally, leading to fruitfulness as they discuss insights with friends or in church.⁵¹

Interdependence of Ingredients

These ingredients are interdependent; neglecting one hinders overall progress. For instance, Bible study without prayer may lead to intellectualism, while service without Scripture risks burnout. Together, they create a fertile environment for the Holy Spirit to work, promoting steady maturation in both physical and digital realms.

2.2 Assessment or Evaluation Strategy for Determining Growth

To ensure spiritual formation is effective, an assessment strategy is crucial. This framework proposes a multifaceted approach that combines self-reflection, observable indicators, and community input, avoiding mere behavioral checklists in favor of heart-level evaluation. Expanding this, assessments in digital contexts can leverage online tools, aligning

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Grunblatt, “Grunblatt.com.”

with Lowe and Lowe's (2018) emphasis on ecological sanctification, where growth is measured by reciprocal influences and “one anothering.”⁵²

Primary Tool: Periodic Spiritual Growth Assessment Questionnaire

A primary tool is a periodic Spiritual Growth Assessment questionnaire, adapted from established models such as LifeWay, where individuals rate their engagement with disciplines like prayer and Bible study on a scale, alongside self-reporting on attitudes such as anger, forgiveness, and contentment.⁵³ This diagnostic plan includes journaling prompts to track changes over time, such as “How has my response to trials evolved?” or “Am I exhibiting more fruit of the Spirit?” In a digital ministry like Grunblatt.com, readers could use blog-inspired prompts for self-assessment, evaluating how content has influenced their fruit-bearing.⁵⁴

Objective Measures: Biblical Benchmarks

Objective measures include biblical benchmarks: growth is evident in increased love for God and others (Matt. 22:37-39), perseverance in faith (James 1:2-4), and doctrinal soundness (2 Tim. 2:15). Additionally, Acts 20:35 underscores helping others as a key indicator: “In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” This reflects a shift from self-focus to love for others, incorporating justice, care, mercy, and grace in interactions.

⁵² Lowe & Lowe, *Ecologies*.

⁵³ LifeWay Christian Resources, “Spiritual Growth Assessment Process,” LifeWay, 2013, http://blog.lifeway.com/growingdisciples/files/2013/08/Spiritual_Growth_Assessment.pdf.

⁵⁴ Grunblatt, “Grunblatt.com.”

Community Feedback and Accountability

Community feedback provides accountability; mentors or small group leaders can offer insights into relational dynamics, noting transformations in humility or service. Annual reviews, bathed in prayer, ensure assessments align with God's purposes, focusing on motives rather than external actions alone. Lowe and Lowe (2018) add that in online ecologies, assessment can observe “contagious sanctification,” such as how blog readers report inspired actions in their communities.⁵⁵

Grace-Oriented Strategy

This strategy is grace-oriented, recognizing that assessment is not legalistic but a means to celebrate progress and identify areas for the Holy Spirit's intervention. It can be implemented individually or corporately, with tools like apps for tracking disciplines or church workshops for training. In my blog ministry, informal assessment occurs through reader feedback (via non-public channels), gauging if content inspires deeper engagement with Scripture and community, thus measuring ecological impact.

2.3 The Role of the Christian Community in the Spiritual Formation Process

Spiritual formation thrives not in isolation but within the body of Christ, where the church functions as a supportive ecosystem. As Ephesians 4:11-16 illustrates, “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ... from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds

⁵⁵ Lowe & Lowe, *Ecologies*.

itself up in love.” Community sharpens believers: “Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another” (Prov. 27:17). Expanding this, Lowe and Lowe (2018) apply an ecological lens, viewing the body as nested ecologies where connections are “syn Christo” (connected to Christ) and “allelon” (one another), enabling reciprocal growth even online.⁵⁶

Accountability and Gentle Restoration (Galatians 6:1-2)

The community offers accountability, encouraging persistence in spiritual disciplines and gentle restoration for those in sin: “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:1-2). Through fellowship, teaching, and shared worship, believers experience belonging and mutual edification, countering individualism. The church provides structure—safety nets like mentorship and sacraments—that guide formation, while home and broader communities extend this support, including elements of support, encouragement, love, accountability, and fellowship. Lowe and Lowe (2018) extend this to digital realms, arguing that online communities produce similar spiritual outcomes through mediated presence, as Paul was “absent in body but present in spirit” via letters (1 Cor. 5:3).⁵⁷

Extension to Digital Realms (1 Corinthians 5:3)

Grunblatt.com serves as a bridge to community by using Scripture to discuss life and culture, motivating readers to seek conversations with Christian friends or church involvement for fellowship and deeper learning.⁵⁸ This creates a digital ecology that intersects with in-person

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Lowe & Lowe, *Ecologies*.

⁵⁸ Grunblatt, “Grunblatt.com.”

ones, fostering “ecological sanctification” where holiness spreads contagiously.⁵⁹ In essence, the body of Christ mirrors God's relational nature, where diverse members bless one another, accelerating transformation through love and truth—whether face-to-face or online. Without community, growth is limited; within it, Christians mature collectively toward Christ's fullness.

Conclusion

This comprehensive framework integrates foundations with ingredients, assessment, and community roles to promote authentic spiritual formation. By embracing these elements, believers can pursue maturity, reflecting Christ's image in a broken world. In the context of Grunblatt.com, this framework informs content creation, ensuring posts not only answer questions biblically but also inspire communal discipleship within digital ecologies (Lowe & Lowe, 2018).⁶⁰ Future applications may include church programs or blog series emphasizing these for broader impact, potentially collaborating with online education platforms to extend reach.

Grunblatt.com, a free, ad-free blog, is a vital tool for spiritual formation in digital contexts. Grounded in 2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 12:2, and Hebrews 10:24–25, this framework leverages Scripture, accessibility, and offline application to guide readers toward Christlikeness through relationships with other Christians and/or their local church. By addressing challenges like distraction and disconnection, Grunblatt.com equips believers to grow, fulfilling the call to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord” (2 Pet. 3:18).⁶¹

⁵⁹ Grunblatt, “Grunblatt.com.”

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Bibliography

- Campbell, Heidi A. *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*. New York: Routledge, 2020.
- Crossway. *Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001.
- Delashmutt, Gary. "Key Ingredients of Spiritual Maturity." Dwell Community Church, 2014. <https://www.dwellcc.org/teaching/3901/bible/colossians/2/gary-delashmutt/2014/key-ingredients-of-spiritual-maturity>.
- Drexler, James, and Amy H. Bagby. "Defining and Assessing Spiritual Formation: A Necessity for Christian Schooling." *International Christian Community of Teacher Educators Journal* 16, no. 1 (2021). <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/icctej/vol16/iss1/2/>.
- Dyer, John. *From the Garden to the City: The Redeeming and Corrupting Power of Technology*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2011.
- Grunblatt, Sarah Kimball. "Grunblatt.com: Biblical Answers for Christian Living," Grunblatt.com. Accessed June 23, 2025. <https://grunblatt.com>.
- Hill, Christy. "The Role of Community in Spiritual Formation." Christy Hill (blog), November 25, 2014. <https://christy-hill.com/the-role-of-community-in-spiritual-formation/>.
- LifeWay Christian Resources. "Spiritual Growth Assessment Process." LifeWay, 2013. http://blog.lifeway.com/growingdisciples/files/2013/08/Spiritual_Growth_Assessment.pdf.
- Lowe, Stephen D., and Mary E. Lowe. *Ecologies of Faith in a Digital Age: Spiritual Growth through Online Education*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018.
- O'Neal, Alice Tillman. "Christian Education: Eight Essential Elements to Foster Spiritual Formation and Christlikeness." DMin thesis, Liberty University, 2020. <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3419&context=doctoral>.
- Schuurman, Derek J. *Shaping a Digital World: Faith, Culture, and Computer Technology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019.
- Turkle, Sherry. *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. New York: Basic Books, 2011.
- Willard, Dallas. "How Do We Assess Spiritual Growth?" Renovaré. Originally published in *Leadership Journal*, 2009. <https://renovare.org/articles/how-do-we-assess-spiritual-growth>.
- Willard, Dallas. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002.