

# SPIRITUAL FORMATION ©

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# THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

1Jn 4:6 We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

- John 14:16 (NIV) And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate (παράκλητος) to help you and be with you forever
  - παράκλητος (paraklētos).  
Finding an appropriate English translation for παράκλητος is a very difficult task.
  - No single English word has exactly the same range of meaning as the Greek word
  - **Strong:** paraklētos:  
An intercessor, consoler: - advocate, comforter.
  - **Thayer:** παράκλητος, paraklētos  
summoned, called to one's side, especially called to one's aid
  - **Mounce:**  
5x: one called or sent for to assist another; an advocate, one who pleads the cause of another, 1Jn 2:1;
  - one present to render various beneficial service, and thus the Paraclete, whose influence and operation were to compensate for the departure of Christ himself,

## OUR COMFORTER

- Holy Spirit 5x in Matthew, 4x in Mark
- 13x in Luke and Acts 41 Times
- John 3x

- Jhn 14:17 *the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it does not see him or know him. But you know him, because he resides with you and will be in you.*
  - The Paraclete is the Spirit of Truth as being the Bearer of the Divine revelation, **bringing truth home to the hearts of men.**
  - Two Spirits in Contrast
  - 1Jn 4:6 We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the **Spirit of truth** and the **spirit of falsehood.**
  - 1 Corinthians 2:12 (NET)  
Now we have not received the **spirit of the world**, but the **Spirit who is from God**, so that we may know the things that are freely given to us by God
  - **Question:**  
The cosmos broadcast its spirit of error through the air/frequencies (media). What should be the disciple's relationship with the media?

## HIS PRESENCE

The Role of the the presence of the Holy Spirit is to preserve Truth in the hearts of believers



- Jhn 15:26 *When the Advocate comes, whom I will send you from the Father – the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father – he will testify about me,*
  - The word rendered ‘goes out’ occurs in this Gospel only here and Jhn 5:29,
  - but is frequent in the other Gospels and in Revelation (Mat 3:5; Mat 4:4; Mat 15:11; Mat 15:18; Mrk 7:15; Mrk 7:18; Mrk 7:20-21; Mrk 7:23; Luk 4:22; Luk 4:37; Rev 1:16; Rev 4:5, &c.)
  - Preacher’s Homiletical Commentary: *The Comforter (Jhn 14:16).—The Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of Christ, who is the Truth and whose gospel is the truth.*
  - *The reference is to the mission of the Spirit. Testify.—Bear witness (Jhn 14:26).*
  - **Question:**  
What ever happened to witnessing in American Christianity?

## WITNESSING

### The Presence of The Holy Spirit Witnessing

- John 6:13 *when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but will speak whatever he hears, and will tell you what is to come.*
  - By truth Jesus meant the truth about his identity,
  - the truth of his words and actions,
  - and the truth about all that was to happen to him.
  - In time they would fully understand that he was the Son, come from the Father, sent to save people from their sin.
  - The Holy Spirit is the true guide for all believers; his primary task is to instruct us about the truth (1Jn 2:20).

## TRUTH

Jhn 8:32

Then you will  
know the truth,  
and the truth will  
set you free."

7

# THE PROBLEM OF ANOREXIC SPIRITUALITY

The compulsive resistance to some form of  
spiritual nurture

- Luk 15:28 But the older son became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and appealed to him,
- Luk 15:29 but he answered his father, 'Look! These many years I have worked like a slave for you, and I never disobeyed your commands. Yet you never gave me even a goat so that I could celebrate with my friends!
- Luk 15:30 But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your assets with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!'
- Luk 15:31 Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and everything that belongs to me is yours

## **LUKE 15:11-32**

Luk 15:32 It was appropriate to celebrate and be glad, for your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost and is found



- Many people have problems receiving from God
  - Some prefer *to earn rather than to receive*
  - The Problem of Performance:
    - allows us to feel control and protects from our vulnerabilities
  - Performance leads to Ministry Addiction:
    - Some choose ultraistic ministries to fill their emptiness
- Symptoms of Spiritual Anorexia:
  - Exhaustion
  - Depression
  - Anger

## THE PROBLEM OF RECEIVING FROM GOD

People with spiritual anorexia sometimes try to cover up their inability to take in God's love by making extraordinary efforts to spiritually nurture others.

- **Rigid Boundaries:**

- Rigid boundaries may protect us from spiritual abuse but it can also cause our spirits to starve in a isolation
- The drive for spiritual perfection to earn God's acceptance
- This compulsive behavior of self examination is totally futile

## **CONTROL ISSUES**

The constant  
feeling to control  
your spiritual  
growth

- Do I have difficulties receiving from God?
- Do I have difficulties receiving from others?
- Do I experience despair in relation to my spiritual longings?
- Am I driven in my quest for spiritual perfection and unable to rest in receiving God's love?
- Am I accumulating resentments about the amount of energy I spend on giving to others and how little I am getting back?

## **ASSESSING YOUR SOUL**

Self examination

12

# THE PROBLEM OF ADDICTIVE SPIRITUALITY

After beginning with the spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Galatians 3:3



- Ministry is difficult but addictive for those with compulsive personalities.
- An addictive spirituality comes with mixed feeling of **resentment** and **guilt**
  - What's wrong with others?
  - How can they are not as committed as me?
  - Why don't they appreciate my efforts?
- **For some, ministry offers a spiritual high and usually it ends in neglected families, divorce, bad health.**
- The bishop need discernment to distinguish between commitment and addiction

## MINISTRY

The compulsion to do ministry out of fear, self pity, fear & guilt

- Neglecting the needs of others in order to satisfy their addictive personality
- Usually becoming addictive to spiritual practices is a solution for to other addictions.
- This distorted practices has 3 dimensions:
  - Doing:  
focused on spiritual behavior similar to work addiction
  - Feelings:  
looking for an emotional experience
  - Thinking:  
focused on being right

## **ADDICTIVE SPIRITUALITY**

The compulsion to do ministry out of fear, self pity, fear & guilt

- Tolerance
- Progression
- Withdrawal
- Compulsion
  - obligation, constraint, force, coercion, duress, pressure, pressurization, enforcement, oppression, intimidation.
- Obsession
  - fixation, ruling/consuming passion, passion, mania, compulsion, preoccupation, enthusiasm, infatuation, addiction, fetish, craze, hobby horse; phobia, complex, neurosis; Unmanageability

## SYMPTOMS

Spiritual addiction is similar to any other addiction, it demands more and more

- How comfortable am I when I abstain from a certain spiritual practice?
- Do I begin to mentally obsess about the things I have quit?
- Are other people telling me that my spiritual practices have done harm to our relationship?
- Have I ever engaged in spiritual practices more than I intended?
- Has my commitment to spiritual practices ever gotten in the way of other important responsibilities?

## ASSESSING YOUR SOUL

Abandoning  
legalistic  
tendencies and  
embracing our  
God of grace &  
acceptance





# THE PROBLEM OF CODEPENDENT SPIRITUALITY

The feeling of anxiety arising from trying to control somebody else's spiritual well being

- Knowing when to let go is incomprehensible to spiritual codependents.
  - It often disguises itself as deep concern for others.
- Very difficult to detect when is genuine or codependency.
- Codependency:
  - *Obsessional focus to control another's person mood or behavior*
  - Normal among spouses of alcoholics and addicts.

## CONTROLLING SPIRITUALITY

A Destructive form of spirituality that corrupts our love and concern for others

- **Progression:**
  - From demanding to controlling
  - Fighting and giving up
- **Loss of Self:**
  - They are unable to focus on themselves
  - Matthew 7:3-5
- **Lack of Boundaries**
  - They don't know how to set appropriate limits around their involvement in other's spiritual lives.

## **CHARACTERISTICS**

Progression

Loss of Self

Lack of  
Boundaries

- **Controlling:**
  - Fragmented spirituality
  - Meek at church and Domineering at home
- **Resentment:**
  - Develop grudges as others don't behave as directed
  - Fear that others will hurt without their input
- **Abusive:**
  - Mostly when there is a position of power.
  - Shaming, manipulating

## CHARACTERISTICS

Controlling

Resentment

Abusive



- **Spiritual Addicts:**
  - Becoming Enablers to maintain the peace
- **Nonaddicts:**
  - Develop grudges as others don't behave as directed
  - Fear that others will hurt without their input
- **Narcissistic:**
  - Mostly when there is a position of power.
  - Shaming, manipulating

## **TYPES OF SPIRITUAL CODEPENDENCY**

Addicts

Nonaddicts

Narcissistic

- Do you feel anxious about another person's spiritual well-being?
- Am I Attempting to control someone else's spirituality?
- Have I lost my sense of where my own spirituality ends and another person's relationship with God begins?
- Has anyone ever said that my efforts to be helpful spiritually were disrespectful or shaming?

## **ASSESSING YOUR SOUL**

If you answer 'YES' to any question you may be at risk at least of being spiritually codependent

23

# **DISTORTED IMAGES OF GOD**

Assessing the extent of the Damage

- Destructive spiritual patterns like abuse, anorexic, addictive and codependent spirituality usually signal that the problems we are facing are foundational problems in our relationship or perception of the image of God.

## **FINDING THE ROOT CAUSE**

Dealing with gods  
and idols



- It is possible that the God of our formal theology, can be quite different from the God of our experience.
- Our perception of God may vary according to our subjective experience:
  - *god only loves us if we performs*
  - *god doesn't like us, much less love us*

## **CORRELATING THEOLOGY & EXPERIENCE**

Dealing with gods  
and idols

- **The Abusive god:**
  - Quick to anger and slow to forgive
- **The Abandoning god**
  - Always ready to leave
- **The Emotional Distance god**
  - The god who is not there for you
- **The Passive god**
  - Driven to self reliance
- **The god of impossible expectations**
  - The god who is never please with us

## **DISTORTED IMAGES**

Dealing with every  
day experience