



Building A Spiritual Formation Map

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- Recruiting, equipping, and sending the next generation of missionaries.
- Connecting the local church to the global church through spiritual formation, the story of Scripture, and the hope of the gospel.

Summary Thesis

The paths of life can take us to unexpected places. By building a *Spiritual Formation Map*, we can navigate those unexpected places, grounded in the truth that God is working to display His fullness to us, the church, and the world.

As we practice deepening spiritual formation, we become guides who can shepherd others along the well-worn paths we have walked... closer to the heart of God. Ephesians 4 tells us that we have a unified spiritual calling and have received unique gifts to build the body of Christ.

A clear process for spiritual formation will mature us and serve the church. People need simple steps that lead them to the heart of God. If we build a clear map for spiritual formation, we will provide effective cross-cultural care (and be transformed too).

Spiritual Formation

The work of God in the individual believer and collective church to display the fullness of Christ.

- **Question:** What is the primary (or ultimate) outcome of spiritual formation?
- **Prompt:** Take time to reflect on “the fullness” — it’s overwhelming! Then, remind yourself that this is the work of God in you, His church, and the world.

Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (2002):

Spiritual formation in the tradition of Jesus Christ is the process of transforming the inmost dimension of the human being, the heart, which is the same as the spirit or will. It is being formed (really, transformed) in such a way that its natural expression comes to be the deeds of Christ done in the power of Christ.

What are the steps for a Spiritual Formation Map?

1. Spiritual Identity

Hearing and resting in the voice of God calling us 'beloved.'

- **Question:** How do you hear and experience the love of God? What does rest feel like in those moments?
- **Prompt:** In Luke, Jesus went to "a quiet place" multiple times. Reflect on the intimacy he sought and found in those places. As a disciple, your identity is the same as Christ's—you are 'beloved' before your work, you're a delight in your Father's eye, and he knows you.

Henri Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry* (1981):

We do not take the spiritual life seriously if we do not set aside some time to be with God and listen to him.

2. Spiritual Discipline

Personal and purposeful actions to deepen Spiritual Identity.

- **Question:** What are your practices that open your heart to the presence of God? Do actions like solitude, silence, and prayer need to be added in this season of life to listen to the voice of God?
- **Prompt:** Oswald Chambers said in *My Utmost for His Highest* (Feb. 10th), "We cannot grow into holiness, but we must grow in it." Holiness is a gift, and yet the purposeful actions we choose help us hear our identity as *beloved* more clearly.

Pete Scazzaro, "Q&A with Pete Scazzero," published by Barna Digital:

Being a leader for Christ without practicing spiritual disciplines that enable us to abide with him is a contradiction. How can we give what we do not possess? How can we offer the life-transforming message of Jesus if he is not continually transforming us?

Regularly practicing prayer, silence, solitude, meditation on the Scriptures, worship, community, Sabbath, and simplicity is the door we open to receive Jesus and be transformed by his presence.

3. Spiritual Maturity

Walking in a broken world at peace and with hospitality.

- **Question:** The primary enemies of peace and hospitality are *anxiety* and *hurry*. How can you walk in your community as one who is loved, enough, and generous?
- **Prompt:** With a deepening spiritual identity, we now move outwardly in ministry. This move is not “for” God, but “with” God in His Spirit. Jesus said *My peace I give to you...* and *Whatever you did for the least of these, you did for me*. Reflect on your ministry motivations in this season.

Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (1975):

The careful tension between silence and words, distance and closeness, solitude and community forms the basis of the Christian life.

4. Spiritual Leadership

A right understanding of authority with the towel and the table.

- **Question:** From your perspective, what is the tension of power vs. authority... and what does Jesus offer his disciples? To lead in your context, from a deepening spiritual identity with maturity, how do you “use” your authority?
- **Prompt:** In Matthew 10 and 28, Jesus gives disciples *his* authority. Look deeply at your leadership methods from Jesus's perspective: *Take my yoke upon you, for I am gentle and humble in heart*. Allow the Holy Spirit to convict and encourage you.

Søren Kierkegaard, *Parable of the King and the Maiden*,

A King falls deeply in love with a humble maiden, but he faces a dilemma:

The King, despite his immense power, knows that if he approaches her in his royal regalia, she could never truly choose him for who he is. She would always be under the pressure of his position and feel obligated to obey him. The King recognizes that "all the power in the world cannot unlock the human heart—it must be opened from within."

5. Spiritual Life

Recognizing and responding to the movement of the Spirit.

- **Question:** How will the previous steps of spiritual formation bring the heart of God, the life of Jesus, and the indwelling Spirit into a life of love? How does this change your perspective of “the fullness of Christ”?
- **Prompt:** Spiritual life can only be “real” when lived in the midst of the pains and joys of our current moment. Jesus wants us to live in a broken world firmly rooted in Him. He calls us to seek His Kingdom first, *and all these other things will be added...*

Eugene Peterson, *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus Is the Way* (2007):

Jesus as “the way” is the most frequently evaded metaphor...

Practice In The Person Of Jesus

Can you identify all five steps in this scene?

Mark 1:35–39 — **Jesus Prays in a Solitary Place**

35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. 36 Simon and his companions went to look for him, 37 and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”

38 Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” 39 So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Spiritual Identity —>

Spiritual Disciplines —>

Spiritual Maturity —>

Spiritual Leadership —>

Spiritual Life —>

Practice In The Church

Ephesians 4:1-13 — **Unity and Maturity in the Body of Christ**

1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8 This is why it says: *When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.*

9 (What does “he ascended” mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)

11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Questions:

- How does Paul call for both corporate identity and a unique identity?
- In v. 2, how would spiritual disciplines deepen and shape these qualities?
- The heart of spiritual maturity is peace (v. 3), what do you see in vv. 4-6?
- How will you use your leadership to equip “people for works of service”?
- The fruit of a spiritual life is the “fullness of Christ” – what does this mean to you?

Build Your Spiritual Formation Map

Define for yourself deepening personal steps into the fullness of Christ.

1. Define **Spiritual Identity** and your personal reflection.
2. Define **Spiritual Disciplines** and your personal practices.
3. Define **Spiritual Maturity** and your personal ministry.
4. Define **Spiritual Leadership** and your personal application.
5. Define **Spiritual Life** and your personal response.