

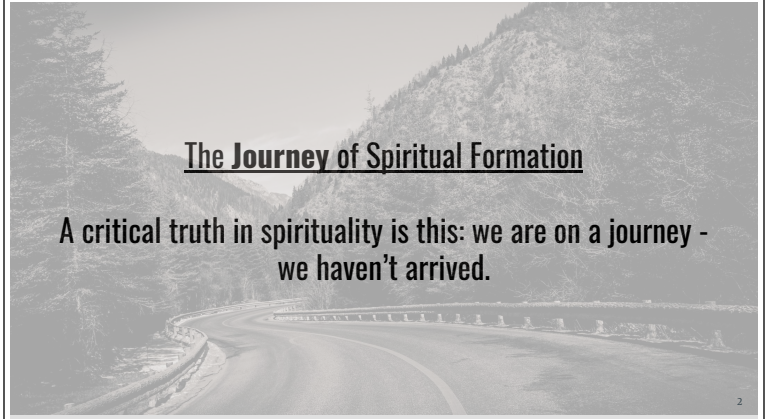


# The Golden Triangle



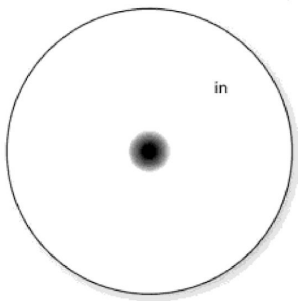
How Your Dreary Spirituality Derives From a Disregard of One of These Three

-Chris Altrack-



## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

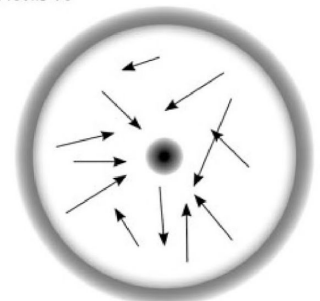
A critical truth in spirituality is this: we are on a journey - we haven't arrived.



Soft at the center, hard at the edges  
**Bounded Set**

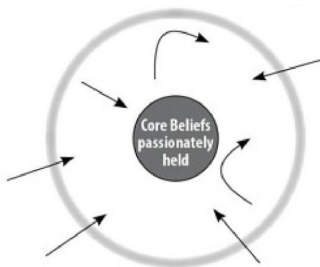
**Bounded Christians Churches act as if they *have* arrived. (my summary)**

The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church Revised and Updated, 253, Alan Hirsch, Michael Frost



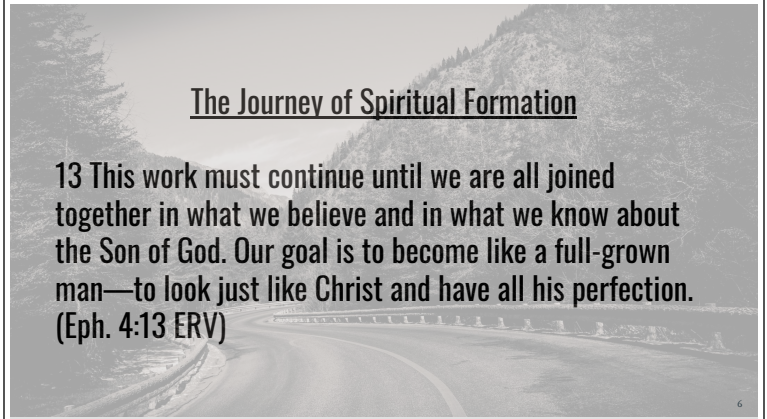
Soft at the center, soft at the edges  
**Fuzzy Set**

**Fuzzy Christians/churches act as if there's nowhere to arrive. (my summary)**



Hard at the center, soft at the edges  
**Centered Set**

**Centered Christians/ churches act as if they are on the way to arriving. (my summary)**



## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

13 This work must continue until we are all joined together in what we believe and in what we know about the Son of God. Our goal is to become like a full-grown man—to look just like Christ and have all his perfection. (Eph. 4:13 ERV)

## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

12 I don't mean that I am exactly what God wants me to be. I have not yet reached that goal. But I continue trying to reach it and make it mine. That's what Christ Jesus wants me to do. It is the reason he made me his. 13 Brothers and sisters, I know that I still have a long way to go. But there is one thing I do: I forget what is in the past and try as hard as I can to reach the goal before me. (Phil. 3:12-13 ERV)

7

## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

Here are some examples of ways people have envisioned this journey (Scripture is vague on the stages of our journey)...

8

## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

Bernard of Clairvaux on Love  
*The Four Loves* by St Bernard of Clairvaux

<https://christianhistoricalinstitute.org/study/module/bernard>

Born in France in 1090, he became a monk, joining one of the new monastic movements, the rigorous Cistercians.

9

## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

Bernard of Clairvaux on Love  
*The Four Loves* by St Bernard of Clairvaux

<https://christianhistoricalinstitute.org/study/module/bernard>

1. The first degree of love: **Loving oneself for self's sake** - Love is one of the four natural affections, which it is needless to name since everyone knows them. And because love is natural, it is only right to love the Author of nature first of all... But nature is so frail and weak that it has to love itself first. This kind of love means loving oneself selfishly... This is not what we are commanded, but what nature directs: "No one ever hated his own body." [Eph. 5:29] But if, as is likely, this self—love becomes excessive and sensuous, then a command holds it back: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." [Leviticus 19:18; Matt 22:37—39]

10

## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

Bernard of Clairvaux on Love  
*The Four Loves* by St Bernard of Clairvaux

2. The second degree of love: **Loving God for self's sake** - So, we start by loving God, not for his own sake but ours. It is good for us to know how little we can do by ourselves, and how much we can do with God's help, and therefore to live rightly before God, our trusty support.

11

## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

Bernard of Clairvaux on Love  
*The Four Loves* by St Bernard of Clairvaux

3. The third degree of love: **Loving God for God's sake** - The third degree of love, we have now seen, is to love God on His own account, solely because He is God.

12

## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

Bernard of Clairvaux on Love  
*The Four Loves* by St Bernard of Clairvaux

4. The fourth degree of love: **Loving self for God's sake** - How blessed is he who reaches the fourth degree of love, in which one loves oneself only for God's sake!...As a drop of water poured into wine loses itself, and takes the color and savor of wine; or as a bar of iron, heated red—hot, becomes like fire itself, forgetting its own nature; or as the air, radiant with sun—beams, seems not so much to be lit as to be light itself; so for those who are holy all human affections melt away by some incredible mutation into the will of God... So, the soul may hope to possess the fourth degree of love — or rather to be possessed by it — only when it has been clothed with that spiritual and immortal body which will be perfect, peaceful, lovely, and in everything wholly subjected to the Spirit. This degree no human effort can attain: it is in God's power to give it to whomever he will.

13

## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

Teresa of Avila *The Interior Castle Seven Mansions*

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bw5kpw4WZQwS16z7Ddz7J40MwM/view>

Born Teresa de Cepeda y Ahumada in central Spain, she spent her early years with her family, giving herself to the duties of extended family life. At age 21, against her father's wishes, she professed vows as a Carmelite at the Spanish Convent of the Incarnation in Avila...Then a serious, prolonged illness (and partial paralysis from an attempted cure) forced her to spend three years in relative quiet, during which time she read books on the spiritual life. When she recovered and returned to the convent she resumed what to her later seemed only a half-hearted spirituality. Of these years, she wrote in her Autobiography, "I voyaged on this tempestuous sea for almost 20 years with these fallings and risings." Then one day while walking down a hallway in the convent, her glance fell on a statue of the wounded Christ, and the vision of his constant love throughout her inconstancy pierced her heart. Gently but powerfully, she said Jesus began to break down her defenses and reveal to her the cause of her spiritual exhaustion: her dalliance with the delights of sin. She immediately broke with her past, undergoing a final conversion. After this, she began experiencing profound mystical raptures, though these soon passed. For the rest of her life, she gave herself completely to her spiritual growth and the renewal of the Carmelite monasteries.

14

## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

Teresa of Avila *The Interior Castle Seven Mansions*

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bw5kpw4WZQwS16z7Ddz7J40MwM/view>

- **FIRST MANSION - Saved Yet With a Worldly Focus** - The First Mansion is where we hear and respond to the Gospel of God's love and forgiveness in Christ and become a Christian. We make our initial discoveries about the Kingdom of God, through Scripture and Christian relationships, and began to learn what it means to be in the world, but not of it. Our focus, however, is largely on getting God's help to obtain the things we haven't been able to get for ourselves and seeking God for deliverance from the addictions that have been causing us so much pain.

15

## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

Teresa of Avila *The Interior Castle Seven Mansions*

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bw5kpw4WZQwS16z7Ddz7J40MwM/view>

- **SECOND MANSION - Divided Loyalties** - The Battle Between the Kingdom of God and the World - In the Second Mansion, we have come to earnestly desire to live life God's way. But the pull of the world with its false pleasures and gratifications is still strong. The conflicts of loyalty become more intense, as we face our significantly mixed motives. We experience increased spiritual attack.

16

## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

Teresa of Avila *The Interior Castle Seven Mansions*

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bw5kpw4WZQwS16z7Ddz7J40MwM/view>

- **THIRD MANSION - Discipleship - Life in Order** - Now, we have developed a relatively balanced life of "discipleship." Put in contemporary terms, our spiritual growth is marked by regular church attendance and ministry, consistent prayer, concerted effort to live the Christian life, and a genuine desire to please and honor God.
- **FOURTH MANSION - Touched by Love** - In the Fourth Mansion, God begins to reveal Himself to us through profound touches of His love and presence. We are given the beginnings of grace to "see" and "feel" God in prayer and in daily life.

17

## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

Teresa of Avila *The Interior Castle Seven Mansions*

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bw5kpw4WZQwS16z7Ddz7J40MwM/view>

- **FIFTH MANSION - The Call to Union** - The Fifth Mansion is a time of transition where our discipleship focus moves even further from "doing" to "being," from serving to loving. God calls us to begin to experience the fulfillment the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus in John 17, the call to union with God. Listening prayer has become a regular part of our experience, with times of deep and adoring silence, times of just being with God. A hunger for God deepens and intensifies, and our motives are purified.

18

## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

### Teresa of Avila *The Interior Castle* Seven Mansions

<https://www.catholic.com/library/teresa-of-avila-the-interior-castle>

- **SIXTH MANSION - Spiritual Betrothal** - Falling in Love With God Alone - The Sixth Mansion is marked by even deeper experiences of God's transforming love with a corresponding passion to serve Him in love. This "falling-head-over-heel-in-love" phase in our relationship with God produces both great joy and great pain. There is now a desire to live with God alone, to sense His presence continually, and to serve Him in utter responsiveness and obedience. Times of prayer can become intense experiences of the fire and passion of God's love and our love for Him. In these last two mansions, the "dark nights," described by John of the Cross, are also experienced, where God can seem totally absent or hidden.

19

## The Journey of Spiritual Formation

### Teresa of Avila *The Interior Castle* Seven Mansions

<https://www.catholic.com/library/teresa-of-avila-the-interior-castle>

- **SEVENTH MANSION - Mystical/Transforming Union** - The Seventh Mansion represents the ultimate in intimacy with God that we can experience in this life. It is marked by a complete integration of mind, body, and spirit, in the life of Christ. Mary and Martha have become one. We can truly say with the Apostle Paul, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). Life in this mansion is a leveling time, with less pronounced highs and lows, where we live continually and transcendentally in the present moment, in the fullness of Christ's love.

20

But how do we get to where we are going? What are the means of spiritual growth?

21



### Dallas Willard

After teaching at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from 1960 to 1965, he moved his family to Southern California, joining USC in 1965. Willard authored more than 200 published articles, 23 critical reviews and 22 forewords. Willard was an award-winning writer on religion. Among his best known works inspired by his Christian faith were *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (HarperCollins 1988), *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering our Hidden Life in God* (HarperOne, 1998), and *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (NavPress, 2002). He was also active in the Renovaré movement and co-edited the *The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Study Bible* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2005).

22

Living under the governance of heaven frees and empowers us to love as God loves. But outside the safety and sufficiency of heaven's rule, we are too frightened and angry to really love others, or even ourselves, and so we arrange **dreary substitutes** in the form of pleasures of various kinds and "loves."

[Dallas Willard *The Great Omission*, 25]

23

### dreary see definition of dreary

adj gloomy, lifeless

Relevance  A-Z  Length

#### Synonyms for dreary

adj gloomy, lifeless

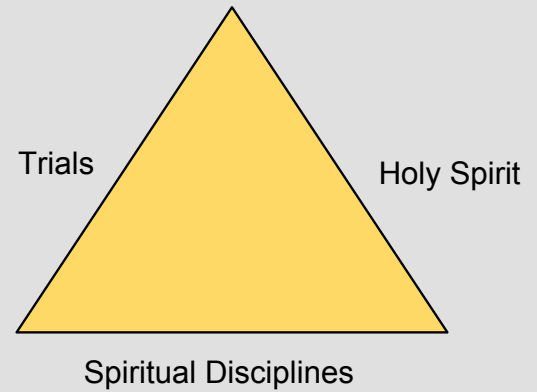
bleak	forlorn	windy	doleful	pedestrian
boring	humdrum	wintry	downcast	raw
colorless	lonely	wretched	funereal	routine
damp	monotonous	black	glum	sorrowful
depressing	sad	blah	joyless	wearisome
dingy	somber	cheerless	lonesome	
dismal	tedious	comfortless	melancholy	
drab	uneventful	depressive	mournful	
dull	uninteresting	dispiriting	oppressive	

24

If this life of faith and love from heaven is the goal of the disciple of Jesus, the natural fulfillment of the new life in Christ, how can we enter into it? While it is in one sense a result of God's presence within us, the New Testament also describes a process involved in our "putting on" the Lord Jesus Christ. It is repeatedly discussed in the Bible under three essential aspects, each inseparable from the other, all interrelated. This process could be presented in a "golden triangle" of spiritual transformation, for it is **as precious as gold** to the disciple, and each of its aspects is as essential to the whole process as three sides are to a triangle.

[Dallas Willard *The Great Omission*, 26]

25



26

## Trials

Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope (Rom. 5:3-4)

27

## Spiritual Disciplines

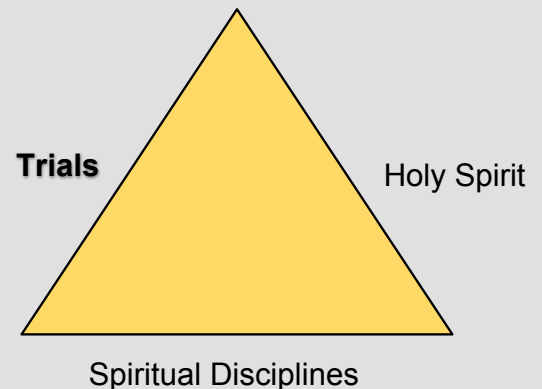
For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. (Rom. 6:19 ESV)

28

## Holy Spirit

10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. 12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (Rom. 8:10-14 ESV)

29



30

**Bottom Line:**

“What attitudes or actions can we undertake that the trials of life (seemingly passively received) become an integrated part of intentional spiritual formation?”

Evan Howard *The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality*, 287

31

**Reality Check:**

When it comes to the tough stuff, we don't tend to embrace it as an opportunity for spiritual formation.

32

**Four Contemporary Christian Approaches to Pain:**

1. **Denial** - “We refuse to acknowledge some painful aspect of reality externally or internally.”
2. **Minimize** - “We admit something is wrong, but in such a way that it appears less serious than it really is.”
3. **Intellectualize** - “We give analysis, theories, and generalities to avoid personal awareness and difficult feelings.”
4. **Distract** - “We change the subject or engage in humor to avoid threatening topics.”

[Peter Scazzero *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* Updated Edition, 124-125]

33

“I get a lot of e-mails from people like Claire, people who fit right into the church until . . . the divorce. The diagnosis. The miscarriage. The depression. Someone comes out. Someone asks a question. An uncomfortable truth is spoken out loud. And what they find is when they bring their pain or their doubt or their uncomfortable truth to church, someone immediately grabs it out of their hands to try and fix it, to try and make it go away. Bible verses are quoted. Assurances are given. Plans with ten steps and measurable results are made. With good intentions tinged with fear, Christians scour their inventory for a cure. But...We are called to enter into one another's pain, anoint it as holy, and stick around no matter the outcome...Convinced the gospel is a product we've got to sell to an increasingly shrinking market, we like our people to function as walking advertisements: happy, put-together, finished—proof that this Jesus stuff WORKS!...

[Rachel Held Evans, *Searching for Sunday*, 72-73, 228.]

34

...At its best, such a culture generates pews of Stepford Wife –style robots with painted smiles and programmed moves. At its worst, it creates environments where abuse and corruption get covered up to protect reputations and preserve image. ‘The world is watching,’ Christians like to say, ‘so let’s be on our best behavior and quickly hide the mess. Let’s throw up some before-and-after shots and roll that flashy footage of our miracle product blanching out every sign of dirt, hiding every sign of disease.’ But if the world is watching, we might as well tell the truth. And the truth is, the church doesn’t offer a cure. It doesn’t offer a quick fix. The church offers death and resurrection. The church offers the messy, inconvenient, gut-wrenching, never-ending work of healing and reconciliation. The church offers grace. Anything else we try to peddle is snake oil.”

[Rachel Held Evans, *Searching for Sunday*, 72-73, 228.]

35

**Jesus models the two basic approaches to pain:**

20 Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. 21 So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” 22 Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. 23 And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit...27 “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say?”

**‘Father, save me from this hour’?**  
But for this purpose I have come to this hour.  
28 **Father, glorify your name.”**

(Jn. 12:20-28 ESV)



36

21 After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." 22 The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. 23 One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, 24 so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. 25 So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" 26 Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. 27 Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." 28 Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. 29 Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. 30 So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night. 31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. (Jn. 13:21-31 ESV)



37

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you (Jn. 17:1 ESV)



38

#### Chris Altrick *Prayers from the Pit*

But what does this mean? What is the significance of asking for God to be glorified in the midst of a horrendous hour? The word "glorify" is a sibling of the word "glory." Glory crops up early in John's gospel. He introduces the story of Jesus with these words: "We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14 ESV) John then discloses what this glory is: "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known." (Jn. 1:18 ESV) Jesus' glory is the means by which he reveals God to us...



39

This God-revealing glory shined brightly through the miracles of Jesus. For example, after Jesus changed water to wine John records, "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory" (John 2:11 ESV). Regarding the raising of Lazarus, Jesus states, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God"...Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:4, 40 ESV). Through the miracles, Jesus revealed God. He showed the power and majesty of God. These miracles were like spotlights illuminating God. We see something about God we would not have seen without them...



40

And Jesus believes that his hour can do something similar. His suffering on the cross can shed light upon God. We will be able to see something about God we would not have seen without this hour. Thus, as Jesus awaits his agony, he prays for God to be glorified. He asks that the darkness of the hour provide the perfect setting for God to be illuminated. Jesus requests that God publicize something about his person through the misery of this moment. Rather than, "Save me so that I will be safe," Jesus prays "Show yourself so that you will be seen." Jesus embraces this hour because he knows that others will see God in a way they would not have seen without this hour. Humanity will observe God's love and faithfulness in ways they could not without this hour. This trial will become a viewfinder through which others will more clearly picture the heart of God. Thus rather than run from it, Jesus runs toward it. He prays that in this hour of risk and cost, the light will shine upon God in a way it never has before.

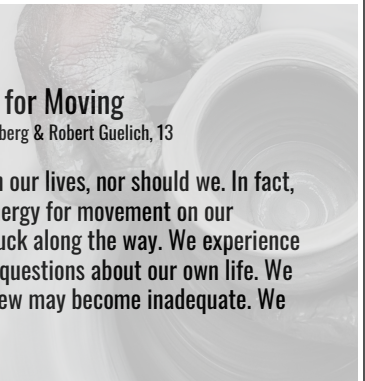


41

### Crisis: A Time for Moving

*The Critical Journey* Janet Hagberg & Robert Guelich, 13

We cannot escape most of the crisis in our lives, nor should we. In fact, these events frequently provide the energy for movement on our spiritual journey, even when we are stuck along the way. We experience a death of someone close, and we ask questions about our own life. We wonder about meaning. Our present view may become inadequate. We ask deeper questions...



42

## Crisis: A Time for Moving

*The Critical Journey* Janet Hagberg & Robert Guelich, 13

...A crisis can knock us off balance, making us afraid, vulnerable, and ripe for change...If we become bitter or too resistant, we can get very stuck. But if we let the change or crisis touch us, if we live with it and embrace it as difficult as that is, we are more likely to grow and to move eventually to another stage or spiral in our journey. When we are most vulnerable, we have the best chance to learn and move along the way. In the midst of pain there is promise.

43

“The number one contributor to spiritual growth was not transformational teaching. It was not being in a small group. It was not reading deep books. It was not energetic worship experiences. It was not finding meaningful ways to serve. It was suffering. People said they grew more during seasons of loss, pain, and crisis than they did at any other time...One line of thinking is that adversity can lead to growth. Another line of thinking is that the highest levels of growth cannot be achieved without adversity. It may be that somehow adversity leads to growth in a way that nothing else does.”

John Ortberg “Don’t Waste a Crisis”  
Leadership Jan. 31, 2011,  
www.christianitytoday.com

44

## 8 Ways God Uses Adversity for Our Maturity

1. A greater level of *brokenness* - and with it the freedom from judging others.
2. A greater appreciation for *Holy Unknowing* (Mystery) - we become more content with what we don’t know about God.
3. A deeper ability to *wait for God*. (me - we are more at peace with what God is not doing yet)
4. A greater *detachment* - “Along the way, in this journey with Christ, we get attached to...behaviors, habits, things, and people in a healthy way...[Suffering], more than anything else, cuts off our attachments to who we think we ought to be, or who we falsely think we are. Layers of our counterfeit self are shed. Something truer, that is Christ in and through us, slowly emerges.”

[Peter Scazzero *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* Updated Edition 112-115]

45

## 8 Ways God Uses Adversity for Our Maturity

[Timothy Keller, *Walking With God through Pain and Suffering*, 190-193]

### 5 - Suffering transforms our attitude toward ourselves.

It humbles us and removes unrealistic self-regard and pride. It helps us see how dependent upon God we’ve always been. It reveals weaknesses within us (because it brings out the worst in us).

### 6 - Suffering changes our relationship to the good things in our lives.

We may see how some things have become too important and how some have become not important enough.

46

## 8 Ways God Uses Adversity for Our Maturity

[Timothy Keller, *Walking With God through Pain and Suffering*, 190-193]

### 7 - Suffering can strengthen our relationship to God as nothing else can.

While pain can turn us from God, it can also make our relationship with God more genuine.

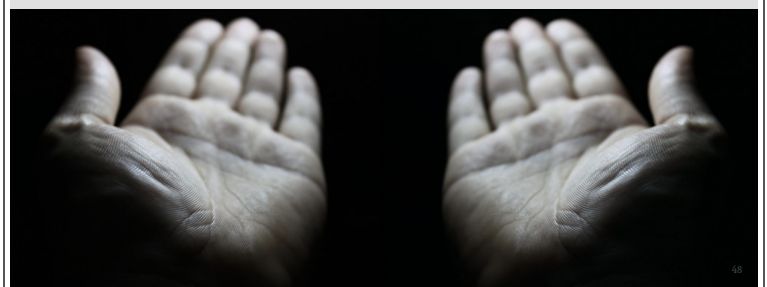
Suffering drives us to pray as we’ve never before prayed.

### 8 - Suffering is almost a prerequisite if we are going to be of much use to others.

Adversity makes us far more compassionate than we would have otherwise been.

47

How do we let God use trials in these ways?



48



## How trials become means of spiritual formation

*The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality* Evan B. Howard, 288-289

1. When we approach them with a soft heart. “As wax cannot take the imprint of a seal unless it warmed or softened thoroughly, so a man cannot receive the seal of God’s holiness unless he is tested by labors and weakness.” - Diodochus of Photike. “If we allow trials to soften (rather than to harden) us, we begin to trust our life to God, lifting the container of our sufferings as a gift, to use Catherine of Siena’s image, to be received by God and filled with the water of his grace.”

49

## How trials become means of spiritual formation

*The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality* Evan B. Howard, 288-289

2. When we approach them with a clear mind. “By paying attention to the nature and character of our trials, we cultivate discerning spiritual formation: spiritual formation that is appropriate to the real conditions of one’s life. Coming to our trials with a clear mind also means determining to learn from our trials.”

50

## How trials become means of spiritual formation

*The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality* Evan B. Howard, 288-289

3. When we approach them with a strong will. “[The] strong will encouraged here is a settled readiness to persevere through the thick of it...this is the willingness of a strong will.”

51

## How trials become means of spiritual formation

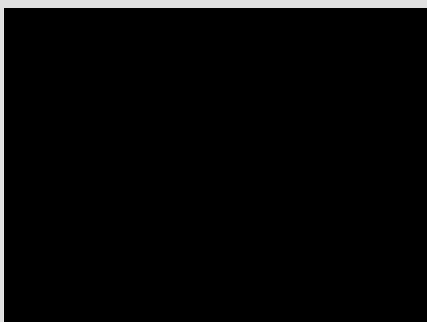
*I think the thing that made me grow spiritually more than anything was problems that had to be overcome...*

Alvin Luther, Philippine Missionary, March 2016

52

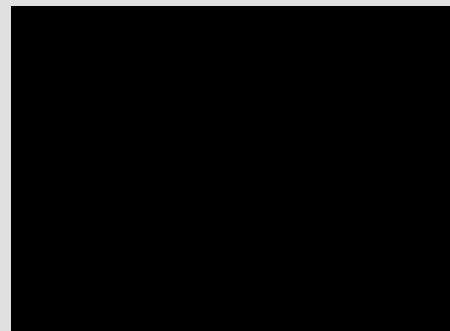
## How trials become means of spiritual formation

Alvin Luther, Philippine Missionary, March 2018



53

Lawana Maxwell, Women’s Minister, Highland Church of Christ



54



One of my biggest fears was having a son with autism. Fast forward a couple years into Judah's life, & we realize that our son has autism. It was a blow. Fear immediately swept over me & I physically felt a weight & a cloud of despair come over me in that season.

So here we are in a new season just a few short years later seeing the growth in us all that wouldn't have taken place if not for our son. And while a part of me still grieves & still asks "why"? I am at a place of letting God be who He says he is and simply be thankful for the son he gave us. Embracing the moments with my son that are more sweet than I could imagine. Celebrating milestones that I didn't understand previously how big of a deal they actually were. For every word we hear, it's a celebration in our home. We pray over him daily & are believing for mountains to be moved. Seeing God answer some of those prayers has increased my faith. Trusting him in the unanswered ones has also stretched me in ways I never imagined. There is always something good in the pain. I'm learning to see that more every day.

Bethany Lawson

55

### Bottom Line:

"What attitudes or actions can we undertake that the trials of life (seemingly passively received) become an integrated part of intentional spiritual formation?"

Evan Howard *The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality*, 287

56

### #1 - Develop Your Authentic Self

Peter Scazzero *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* Updated Edition

...most Christians do not think they have permission to consider their feelings, to name them, or express them openly. This applies especially to the more "difficult" feelings of fear, sadness, and anger...When we deny our pain, losses, and feelings year after year, we become less and less human...The issue then is how to dismantle the false self and allow our true self in Christ to emerge. (44, 62)

57

### #2 - Lament

It is a curious fact that the church has, by and large, continued to sing songs of orientation in a world increasingly experienced as disoriented. That may be commendable. It could be that such relentlessness is an act of bold defiance in which these psalms of order and reliability are flung in the face of the disorder...It is my judgment that this action of the church is less a defiance guided by faith and founded in the good news, and much more a frightened, numb denial and deception that does not want to acknowledge or experience the disorientation of life...I think that serious religious use of the complaint psalms has been minimal because we have believed that faith does not mean to acknowledge and embrace negativity. We have thought that acknowledgment of negativity was somehow an act of unfaith.

(Walter Brueggeman, *Spirituality of the Psalms*, 25-26)

58

### #2 - Lament

Community Laments: Ps. 12, 44, 58, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 85, 89, 90, 94, 123, 126, 129

Individual Laments: Ps. 3, 4, 5, 7, 9-10, 13, 14, 17, 22, 25, 26, 27

59

### #3 - Surrender

Ignatius of Loyola created the Ignatian Exercises which ends with the Contemplation of the Love of God. This final meditation includes the *Suscipe*, the climactic prayer of surrender, a capstone and bedrock for all discipleship.

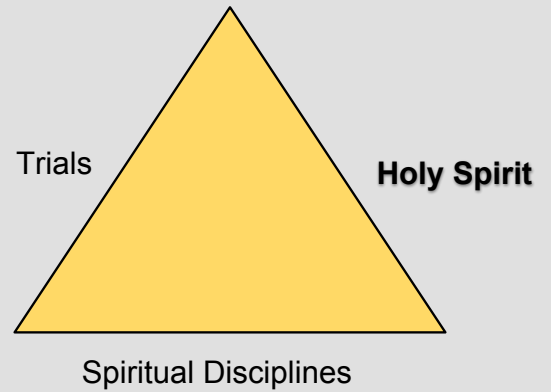
It is modeled after Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus' ultimate response to suffering (not my will but yours) as well as his prayer from the cross (into your hands I commit my Spirit).

60

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,  
my memory, my understanding,  
and my entire will,  
All I have and call my own.

You have given all to me.  
To you, Lord, I return it.

Everything is yours: do with it what you will.  
Give me only your love and your grace,  
that is enough for me.



### Bottom Line:

*Engage in practices that enable you to listen to the Spirit.*

### The Experience of the Spirit

*The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality* Evan B Howard, 286-287

1. **"We prepare for the coming of the Spirit:**
  - a. acquiring a clear understanding of the Spirit in scripture and tradition,
  - b. fostering a passionate desire for the Spirit,
  - c. waiting for the Spirit with empty hands (we have a hard time receiving when our hands are already full with other things),
  - d. going to where the Spirit is present (whether silent retreats or noisy revival meetings)."

### The Experience of the Spirit

*The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality* Evan B Howard, 286-287

2. **"We open ourselves to the experience of the Spirit,**
  - a. waiting in an attitude of expectant leisure (trust),
  - b. ready to welcome and not to quench the Spirit no matter how the Spirit may manifest."
3. **"We learn to notice the movements of the Spirit within experience:**
  - a. the fluctuations of thought or feeling,
  - b. the demonstrations of signs and wonders,
  - c. the manifestations of life through the gifted community."

### The Experience of the Spirit

*The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality* Evan B Howard, 286-287

4. **"We develop an appreciation for the Spirit's presence in experience:** a sense of wonder, anticipation, attentiveness."
5. **"And, finally, we respond by letting go to the Spirit,**
  - a. yielding to the Spirit's touch,
  - b. walking where the Spirit leads,
  - c. taking that risk of obedience."

This makes the discipline of listening to the Spirit **paramount** in the spiritual life.

Adam McHugh:

- “listening is the central act of the people of God”
- “listening is the first act of discipleship”

Adam McHugh, *The Listening Life* (Intervarsity Press, 2015), 10

67

Throughout the Bible listening is the central act of the people of God...The centerpiece of Israel's prayer life, the Shema, begins with the word *hear*: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one”...Paul reminds us that hearing must come before faith...The apostle James famously counsels his hearers to be quick to listen, slow to speak...But somewhere along the way we start to violate the natural order of things. Speaking our minds and asserting ourselves take priority over listening. We interrupt someone else because we are convinced we already know what he or she is going to say. We begin to take up more space than we allow for others. We consider ourselves experts on topics without anything more to learn. We tell God what to give rather than asking what God wants to give...We speak volumes, but we listen in snippets.

Adam McHugh *The Listening Life* 10-11

68

We may not hear from God because our lives are too loud. Or we may not hear from God because our lives are too quiet.

**Too loud**...One of the questions I have wrestled with is, why does it seem like the figures in the biblical stories hear from God so much more than we do?... Perhaps our ancestors didn't have the same luxury of distraction. Their inability to escape into television or the Internet...their slow pace of life...helped draw their attention to the heavens...A loud, overcrowded, hyperactive life is the antithesis of the listening life.

Adam McHugh *The Listening Life* 76-79

69

**Too quiet**...The Holy Spirit, it turns out, is not a hapless talk show host nattering about everything under the sun, hoping that a few people will turn in to the right frequency. Instead, God's word comes most often to a certain kind of person seeking to lead a certain kind of life...As much as I enjoy the idea of sitting with God on a porch swing, sipping lemonade and chatting about the weather, the better image may be a soldier in the heat of battle, in constant communication with his commanding officer.

Adam McHugh *The Listening Life* 76-79

70

### Three Ways God Speaks (“The Three Lights”)

1. Circumstances - (open/ closed doors)
2. The Bible
3. **The Spirit**

Dallas Willard, *Hearing God* Updated and Expanded, 222-223, 228-231

71

### The Holy Spirit Speaking in Acts

- And **the Spirit** said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” - Acts 8:29
- And while Peter was pondering the vision, **the Spirit** said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you.” - Acts 10:19
- While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, **the Holy Spirit** said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” - Acts 13:2
- “...except that **the Holy Spirit** testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.” - Acts 20:23

72

## Consolation & Desolation

Ignatius of Loyola counseled that we could discern the movement of God (and his Spirit) by recognizing the presence of “consolation” or “desolation.”

Mark Thibodeaux *God's Voice Within*

73

## Desolation

1. *Faithlessness*--The decision is not motivated by trust in God. Instead, it is driven by doubt about what God or others might do if we make a different choice than the one we've made.
2. *Hopelessness*--The decision does not grow out of confidence in God's providence. It is stirred by despair at what the future might hold if we made a different choice than the one we've made.
3. *Lovelessness*--The decision does not lead to greater love for others. Instead, it results in isolation from others or even aggressiveness toward others.
4. *Lack of closeness to God*--The decision does not produce a sense of closeness with God. Instead, after carrying out the decision, we feel distant from God.

Mark Thibodeaux *God's Voice Within*

74

## Desolation

5. *Disquietude and agitation*--The outcome of the decision is not a heart full of peace. We experience disquietude and agitation after making our choice.
6. *Boredom and apathy*--The decision grows out of feelings of indifference toward others or toward God.
7. *Fear and worry*--If consolation is “letting God dream in us,” desolation is “letting the false spirit nightmare in us.” When our decision is driven by anxiety or fear it does not end in God's will being done.
8. *Secrecy*--If the decision we reach is something we can't enthusiastically share with others, it is likely not leading to God's will.

Mark Thibodeaux *God's Voice Within*

75

## Consolation

1. *Faith, hope and love*--God's will is most often accomplished when our decision is rooted in answers to questions like these: What is the most faith-filled thing to do? What is the most hopeful thing to do? What is the most loving thing to do?
2. *A sense of God's closeness*--One of the strongest signs that we are in a state of consolation is a strong, deep and lasting experience of the presence of God after reaching a decision.
3. *Peace and tranquility*--The decision we've made may still lead to problems and even to negative emotions. But if it is aligned with God's will, it will ultimately bring a deep peace to our heart.
4. *Great desires*--If we've made a certain choice because it seems to correspond with a great passion in our heart for some aspect of God's work in the world, there is a greater chance that this choice reflects God's will.
5. *Transparency*--When we've reached a decision and can confidently share that decision with mentors and others, that decision is potentially aligned with God's will.

Mark Thibodeaux *God's Voice Within*

76

## **Three Factors of The Spirit's Voice**

1. The **weight** of the voice. The force of it impacts us and inclines us toward assent.
2. The **spirit** of the voice. It is peaceful, confident, joyful, and full of goodwill. It is not the voice of a bully.
3. The **content** of the voice. It is consistent with the truths about God's nature and kingdom made clear in the principles of Scripture.

Dallas Willard, *Hearing God* Updated and Expanded, 222-223, 228-231

77



78

**Bottom Line:**  
*Engage in practices that enable you to listen to the Spirit.*

79

**Mindfulness/ Attentiveness**  
 Becoming more aware of and following through on the “nudges” of the Spirit throughout the day.

80

**Examen**  
 Ignatius of Loyola counseled followers to devote themselves to this practice of reviewing the day/ half day as a way of discerning the movement/ presence of God/ the Spirit.  
 Mark Thibodeaux's *Reimagining the Ignatian Examen* provides 34 variations on the examen.

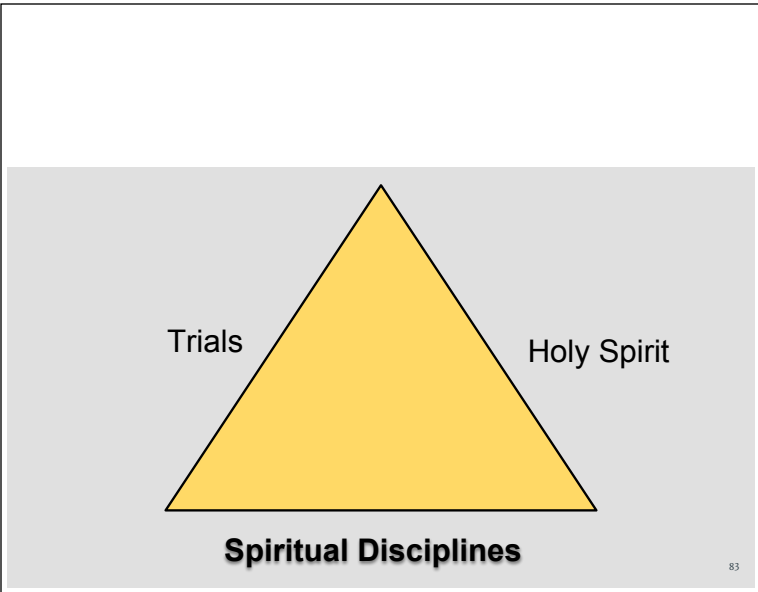
EXAMPLES:

1. Fears, Attachments, Control, Entitlements (FACE)
2. Thoughts, Words, Deeds
3. Clinging, Avoiding, Just Right
4. Places, Things, Activities

81

**Solitude/ Silence/ Unplugging**

82



**Bottom Line:**  
 Write and enact a Rule of Life

84

## The Truth About Spiritual Disciplines

*The Life You've Always Wanted* John Ortberg, 47-62

1. Spiritual transformation is not a matter of trying harder, but of training wisely.
2. A discipline is any activity I can do by direct effort that will help me do what I cannot now do by direct effort.
3. A spiritual discipline is any activity that can help me gain power to live life as Jesus taught and modeled.
4. **Wise training begins with a clear decision. People do not just drift into a life of training.**

85

## Planting V Tending

*Sacred Pathways Updated and Expanded* Gary Thomas, 231-233

“Some of us live with the mistaken impression that our faith needs only to be planted, not tended. Becoming a mature Christian, some think, is like becoming six feet tall--it either happens or it doesn't...[but] The first question we should ask ourselves, then, is ‘How am I doing in this regard? Have I truly tended my garden, or did I just plant it?’”

86

## Rule of Life as a Tool

*Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* Peter Scazzero, 190

[The word “rule”] comes from the Greek for “trellis.” A trellis is a tool that enables a grapevine to get off the ground and grow upward, becoming more fruitful and productive. In the same way, a Rule of Life is a trellis that helps us abide in Christ and become more fruitful spiritually. A Rule of Life, very simply, is an intentional, conscious plan to keep God at the center of everything we do.

87

## The Rhythm of a Rule of Life

*Soul Feast* Marjorie Thompson, 138

A rule of life is a pattern of spiritual disciplines that provides structure and direction for growth in holiness. When we speak of *patterns* in our life, we mean attitudes, behaviors or elements that are routine, repeated, regular. Indeed, the Latin term for “rule” is *regula*, from which our words *regular* and *regulate* derive. A rule of life is not meant to be restrictive, although it certainly asks for genuine commitment. It is meant to help us establish a rhythm of daily living, a basic order within which new freedoms can grow. A rule of life, like a trellis, curbs our tendency to wander and supports or frail efforts to grow spiritually.

88

## The Rhythm of a Rule of Life

*Crafting a Rule of Life* Stephen Macchia, 14

Your personal rule of life is a holistic description of the Spirit-empowered rhythms and relationships that create, redeem, sustain and transform the life God invites you to humbly fulfill for Christ's glory.

89

## Your God is Too Safe

Mark Buchanan, 127

The answer is holy habits, or what are often called spiritual disciplines. I want to call them holy habits, because, as with all habits, they are practices that for a while we think about and work at but eventually weave so deeply into the rhythm of our lives that they define us. They become *our ways*. Life violin scales or five-fret chords, they are often awkward for us at first and produce dubious results. But persisted in, they become natural and create beauty.

90

*Your God is Too Safe* Mark Buchanan, 131

This is not about an heroic striving of or against our wills. Holy habits, like all habits, obviously involve our wills: a resolve of will, sometimes a breaking of it. But these are not exercises in mere willpower. They assume, in fact, that willpower alone is insufficient to motivate us and sustain us in living in the presence of God.

91

**Writing a Rule of Life:  
Three Questions for a Rule of Life**

*Soul Feast* Marjorie Thompson, 142

To summarize, there are three basic questions to reflect on in choosing disciplines for your rule of life:

1. What am I deeply attracted to, and why?
2. Where do I feel God is calling me to stretch and grow?
3. What kind of balance do I need in my life?

92

**Writing a Rule of Life:  
Five Factors**

*Crafting a Rule of Life* Stephen Macchia, 79-136

1. **Time** - daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual *spiritual rhythms and practices*.
2. **Trust** - daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual *relational priorities*.

93

**Writing a Rule of Life:  
Five Factors**

*Crafting a Rule of Life* Stephen Macchia, 79-136

3. **Temple** - daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual *physical priorities* (the care and training of your body, mind and heart).
4. **Treasure** - daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual *financial and material stewardship priorities*.

94

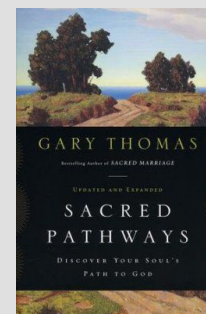
**Writing a Rule of Life:  
Five Factors**

*Crafting a Rule of Life* Stephen Macchia, 79-136

5. **Talent** - daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual *missional priorities*.

95

**Writing a Rule of Life:  
Recognizing Your Pathway**



96



**Writing a Rule of Life:  
Recognizing Your Pathway**

1. Naturalists - Loving God Outdoors
2. Sensates - Loving God with the Senses
3. Traditionalists - Loving God through Ritual and Symbol
4. Ascetics - Loving God in Solitude and Simplicity
5. Activists - Loving God through Confrontation

**Writing a Rule of Life:  
Recognizing Your Pathway**

6. Caregivers - Loving God by Loving Others
7. Enthusiasts - Loving God with Mystery and Celebration
8. Contemplatives - Loving God through Adoration
9. Intellectuals - Loving God with the Mind

**Writing a Rule of Life:  
Three Dimensions**

Adapted from Glen Scorgie *A Little Guide to Christian Spirituality: Three Dimensions of Life with God* (Zondervan, 2007).

Include the three dimensions of life with God (I've replaced his "Christ" with "God" and put the three dimensions in the form of a triangle)

God WITH Us  
*Relational*

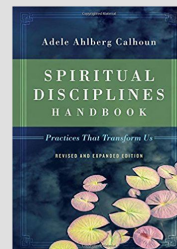
God IN Us  
*Transformational*

God THROUGH Us  
*Vocational*

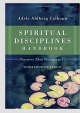
**The Triangle of Transformation Rule of Life**

Chris Altmock

God WITH Us <i>Relational</i>	God IN Us <i>Transformational</i>	God THROUGH Us <i>Vocational</i>
Practices that enable me to enjoy and experience God's presence, companionship, and friendship.	Practices that allow me to participate in God's transformation of my character.	Practices that permit me to participate with God in his purposes in the world and in the lives of others.
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____



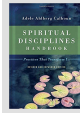
Examines 75 distinct spiritual disciplines



## 75 Spiritual Disciplines

1. *Accountability Partner* - to give a regular and honest account of my choice, priorities and temptations to a godly and wise companion who points me to Christ.
2. *Bible Study* - to know what the Bible says and how it intersects with my life.
3. *Blessing others/ Encouragement* - to instill courage, confidence and hope through expressing the delight God has in others.
4. *Breath Prayer* - to pray a simple, intimate prayer of heartfelt desire before God.
5. *Care of the Earth* - to honor the Creator by loving, nurturing and stewarding his creation.

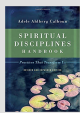
103



## 75 Spiritual Disciplines

6. *Celebration* - to take joyful, passionate pleasure in God and the radically glorious nature of God's people, Word, world and purposes.
7. *Centering Prayer* - to quiet the heart and rest in God alone.
8. *Chastity* - to revere God by receiving and honoring my body and the bodies of others with purity of thought and action.
9. *Community* - to express and reflect the self-donating love of the Trinity by investing in and journey with others.
10. *Compassion* - to become the healing presence of Christ to others.

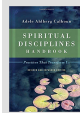
104



## 75 Spiritual Disciplines

11. *Confession and Self-Examination* - to surrender my weaknesses and faults to the forgiving love of Christ and intentionally desire and embrace practices that lead to transformation.
12. *Contemplation* - to wake up to the presence of God in all things.
13. *Contemplative Prayer* - to develop an open, restful receptivity to the Trinity that enables me to always be with God just as I am.
14. *Control of the Tongue* - to turn the destructive way I use words into authentic, loving and healing speech.
15. *Conversational Prayer* - to talk naturally and unselfconsciously to God in prayer times with others.

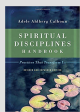
105



## 75 Spiritual Disciplines

16. *Covenant Group* - to enter into authentic confidential and healing relationships with a committed group of fellow pilgrims.
17. *Detachment* - to nurture the spirit of trust that is attached to God alone.
18. *Lectio Divinal Devotional Reading* - to prayerfully encounter and surrender to the Living God through attending to Scripture.
19. *Discernment* - to delight in and recognize the voice and will of God.
20. *Discipling* - to be in a relationship where I am encouraged or where I encourage another to become an apprentice of Jesus.

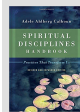
106



## 75 Spiritual Disciplines

21. *Examen* - to reflect on where I was most and least present to God's love in my day.
22. *Face-to-Face Connection* - to connect face to face, in person, below the surface of words and conversation.
23. *Fasting* - to let go of an appetite in order to seek God on matters of deep concern for others, myself and the world.
24. *Fixed-Hour Prayer* - to stop my work and pray throughout the day.
25. *Forgiveness* - to live into Jesus' forgiving heart and stop the cycle of vengeance.

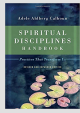
107



## 75 Spiritual Disciplines

26. *Gratitude* - to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's prompting to live with a grateful heart, cognizant of God's work in my life and my abundant resources.
27. *Holy Communion* - to be nourished by Christ, tasting the sweet depths of redemption.
28. *Hospitality* - to be a safe person who offers others the grace, shelter and presence of Jesus.
29. *Humility* - to become like Jesus in his willingness to choose the hidden way of love rather than the way of power.
30. *Iconography* - to open myself to knowing God through the visual shorthand of icons that portray the lives of biblical characters, events and seasons saints.

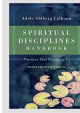
108



## 75 Spiritual Disciplines

31. *Inner-Healing Prayer* - to assist the emotionally broken and wounded as they seek God for the healing only he can give.
32. *Intercessory Prayer* - to turn my concerns and worries into prayer; to enter God's heart for the world and then prayer from there.
33. *Journaling* - to be alert to my life through writing and reflecting on God's presence and activity in, around and through me.
34. *Justice* - to love others by seeking their good, protection, gain and fair treatment.
35. *Labyrinth Prayer* - to make a quiet, listening pilgrimage to God.

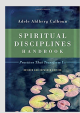
109



## 75 Spiritual Disciplines

36. *Listening Prayer* - to quiet the inner and outer noise so I can open my heart and listen for God's voice.
37. *Liturgical Prayer* - to open myself to God through established patterns or traditions of written prayers and readings.
38. *Meditation* - to more deeply gaze on God through the written Word and created order.
39. *Memorization* - to carry the life-shaping words of God in me at all times and in all places.
40. *Mentoring* - to accompany and encourage others to grow in their God-given potential.

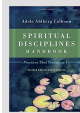
110



## 75 Spiritual Disciplines

41. *Mindfulness/ Attentiveness* - to live wholeheartedly in the present moment, alert to God and without judgement.
42. *Pilgrimage* - to go on an outer journey that will lead me closer to God.
43. *Practicing the Presence* - to develop a continual openness and awareness of Christ's presence living in me.
44. *Prayer of Lament* - to take my complaints, anger, suffering, frustrations and heartaches to God.
45. *Prayer of Recollection* - to rest in God, allowing him to calm and heal my fragment and distracted self.

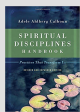
111



## 75 Spiritual Disciplines

46. *Prayer Partners* - to share the journey of prayer with a trusted companion.
47. *Prayer Scripture* - to allow God to shape my prayer life through the words of Scripture.
48. *Prayer Walking* - to align myself with Christ and his intercession for the kingdom to come while walking in particular places.
49. *Rest* - to honor God and my human limitations through restful rhythms.
50. *Retreat* - to pull back from daily life and spend extended time with God.

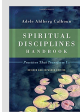
112



## 75 Spiritual Disciplines

51. *Rule for Life* - to live a sane and holy rhythm that reflects a deep love for God and respect for how he has made me.
52. *Sabbath* - to set apart one day a week for rest and worship of God.
53. *Secrecy* - to follow the simple and often hidden way of Christ.
54. *Self-Care* - to value myself as my heavenly Father values me.
55. *Service* - to reflect the helping, caring and sharing love of God in the world.

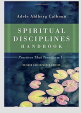
113



## 75 Spiritual Disciplines

56. *Silence* - to free myself from the addiction to and distraction of noise so I can be totally present to the Lord; to open myself to God in the place beyond words.
57. *Simplicity* - to uncomplicate and untangle my life so I can focus on what really matters.
58. *Slowing* - to curb my addiction to busyness, hurry and workaholism; to learn to savor the moment.
59. *Small Group* - to take my spiritual journey with a community of trusted friends.
60. *Sobriety* - to live with moderation and full attachment to God--without dependence on substances that are harmful to my life.

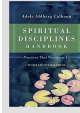
114



## 75 Spiritual Disciplines

61. *Solidarity in Jesus' Sufferings* - to be with Jesus in my pain and with Jesus in his pain.
62. *Solitude* - to leave people behind and enter into time alone with God.
63. *Spiritual Direction* - to give caring attention to my relationship with God accompanied by the prayerful presence of someone who helps me listen well to God.
64. *Spiritual Friendship* - to develop a friendship that encourages and challenges me to love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength.
65. *Stewardship* - to live as a steward of God's resources in all areas of life; to live out of the awareness of that nothing I have is my own.

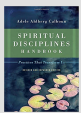
115



## 75 Spiritual Disciplines

66. *Submission* - to have Jesus as the Master of my life in absolutely every way.
67. *Teachability* - to remain a lifelong learner who is continually open to the fresh wind of the Holy Spirit.
68. *Truth Telling* - to live an authentically truthful life.
69. *Unity* - to live in harmony with Christ's desire for the church to be one; to be a bridge-builder and peacemaker in the body of Christ.
70. *Unplugging* - to be fully present to an uninterrupted in my interactions with God and others.

116



## 75 Spiritual Disciplines

71. *Visio Divina* - to worship God in the beauty of created things.
72. *Waiting* - to patiently trust in God's goodness and timing in the events and relationships of my life.
73. *Welcoming Prayer* - to welcome Jesus into every part of my life, body, circumstances and relationships.
74. *Witness* - to reveal the life-changing love of Jesus to others.
75. *Worship* - to honor and adore the Trinity as the supreme treasure of life.

117