

INTEGRATED SPIRITUAL FORMATION

A PROJECT REPORT

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

THOMAS R. GARDNER

WINEBRENNER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FINDLAY, OHIO

AUGUST 1, 2015



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Though there have been many who encouraged me along the way, there has been no greater encouragement than that of my life partner, Carol Gardner. She made the sacrifices with me of time and treasure to finish the project. When I was tired she held up my arms. When I was discouraged she reignited my vision and passion. She was the first line editor not only of words but heart for this project and our larger ministry. To Carol goes my love and gratitude for traveling this path with me.

## ABSTRACT

The issue addressed in this research project was an integrated approach to the spiritual formation for followers of Jesus Christ. The researcher identified an integrated approach to spiritual formation that included a continuum of practice that included facets of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming. This continuum of practice was identified in Scripture, the history of the church, and the experience of the researcher. Several approaches to spiritual formation were examined to determine their levels of integration of the facets mentioned above.

The original problem identified in this project was that spiritual formation tended to be mostly behavioral. Spiritual formation was seen as more informational than transformational. The integrated approach was needed to help followers of Christ to grow in the peace and character of Jesus Christ. Special attention was given to obstacles to intimacy with Christ and a simple, inductive model to remove these obstacles.

With the integrated model of formation identified, it was then necessary to create an instrument to measure the growth of followers of Christ. The Integrated Formational Survey (IFS) was based on the fruits of the Spirit seen in Galatians 5:22-23. Each fruit of the Spirit was broken down into three key components of meaning and arranged along a five-point Likert scale. Respondents were pretested and posttested using this instrument. The IFS itself was found to have a high degree of reliability as a measurement of spiritual growth.

This project included both quantitative and qualitative surveys to measure the effect of the integrated model identified by the researcher. Ninety-two individuals took part in the study that included a treatment group and a control group using a classic pretest, posttest experimental approach. There was a pretest, then a forty-day period when the respondents in the treatment group followed the integrated model developed by the researcher or, in the case of the control group, their regular spiritual routine.

The quantitative survey showed little difference in the growth of respondents in the treatment or control groups. The qualitative survey yielded evidence of value in including all four facets of the integrated model in drawing followers of Christ into greater depth of intimacy with Christ.

The research project resulted in the production of a short manual titled *Everything that Grows: Finding Your Rhythm of Spiritual Life in Christ*. The purpose of the short manual is to help followers of Christ formulate their own integrated pathway to spiritual formation resulting in growth in the peace and character of Jesus Christ. This was included as an appendix for this project. Followers of Christ were encouraged to develop their own rhythm of spiritual life that includes facets of resting, awakening, growing, and reproducing. The IFS was included as a periodic reference for spiritual growth in the peace and character of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER ONE  
INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

**Context of the Problem**

Through years in the ministry of walking beside and assisting believers in the body of Christ as a pastor involved in healing and spiritual formation, the researcher has encountered many individuals whose lives have been changed by making a simple decision to walk or live as followers of Jesus Christ. This entails the active and Spirit-led pursuit of his person and character, which is a succinct definition of discipleship. Those who live in the wake of Christ ought themselves to be experiencing the peace of Christ, the “Prince of peace.”<sup>1</sup> Peace has been given to disciples as an inheritance. Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you.”<sup>2</sup>

Some believers do not fully experience the peace Christ intended for the church for many reasons including, but not limited to past trauma or performance-based religious teaching. In a world filled with increasing uncertainty and unrest, people have placed a growing emphasis on “inner healing” in various streams and models from Christ-Centered to New Age in order to uncover and heal emotional pain and limitation and thus find peace. Some of these Christ-centered models include the work of Terry Wardle of Ashland Theological Seminary, Theophostic Ministry developed by Ed Smith, Elijah

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<sup>1</sup> Isa 9:6 [NASB].

<sup>2</sup> Jn 14:27 [NASB].

House developed by John and Paula Sanford, and the works of David Seamands to name just a few. For the sake of this writing all will be referred to as restorative prayer.

Christian models of restorative prayer are seldom practiced as a normative facet of the believer's overall spiritual formation. Restorative prayer has been viewed in some quarters as New Age or too subjective to be seen as a mainstream practice. As a practitioner of restorative prayer in various forms and models, it is the observation of the researcher that those who are seeking peace through formational prayer tend to wait until they are in some extraordinary stress rather than considering it a normative part of spiritual formation. The context for this study is the individual believers who collectively form the body of Christ.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem addressed in this project is a lack of a holistic model to provide a lifestyle of spiritual formation, which includes restorative prayer and results in lasting transformation toward the character of Jesus Christ. This holistic model would necessarily include facets designed to remove any obstacles that would not allow followers of Jesus Christ to continue the spiritual journey toward peace. One of those obstacles is performance-based Christianity that teaches acceptance by God on the basis of works rather than as a free gift of the grace of God.

It has been popular in Christian culture to ask, "What would Jesus do?" reflecting a desire for right behavior. This study and the resulting model aims at the character of Jesus and a right heart from which right behavior is derived. The researcher contends that wholeness brings about right behavior more than right behavior alone brings about wholeness. This wholeness is based upon knowing and loving God.

The Scriptures of the New Testament demonstrate that works or obedience are a result of knowing the love of God. Jesus instructs his followers regarding the preeminence of love by saying, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments... And again, Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him."<sup>3</sup> Consider the epistle of 1 John where the writer says, "By this we know that we are the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, love of God precedes and inspires obedience.

Loving God completely, the greatest of all commandments,<sup>5</sup> requires an unobstructed view of God and his goodness that can be obscured by the remnants of ungodly beliefs that stem from past wounding or performance-based religious teaching. Issues that require healing and transformation often cloud this clear and unobstructed view of God. Unhealed areas in the hearts of believers form a veil, an obstruction between their faces and the face of God—a false concept of God implanted through past wounding or programming as interpreted through pain. The apostle Paul writes, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."<sup>6</sup> To live in the personal presence of God is the goal of a holistic spiritual formation that results in peace and transformation.

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<sup>3</sup> Jn 14:15, 23-24 [NASB].

<sup>4</sup> 1 Jn 5:2-3 [NASB].

<sup>5</sup> Mt 22:27 [NASB].

<sup>6</sup> 2 Cor 3:18 [NASB].

Terry Wardle of Ashland Theological Seminary describes his own personal experience as a new convert to Christianity and the approach to discipleship or spiritual formation. “Behavior modification was another key part of my early training. Soon after becoming a Christian I was presented with a list of do’s and don’ts for proper Christian living. The implication was clear; good Christians live according to these standards and modify their behaviors accordingly.”<sup>7</sup> Though Terry Wardle acknowledges the importance of right Christian doctrine and behavior, he goes on to say, “I can testify that this only leads to a performance based, shallow substitute for Christianity that lacks genuine power and relevance. It does not anticipate the true nature of the Christian pilgrimage, which prioritizes intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ and a long journey through life that can be utterly transformational.”<sup>8</sup>

Henri Nouwen writes similarly, “In a society that overvalues progress, development, and personal achievement, the spiritual life becomes quite easily performance oriented.”<sup>9</sup> Nouwen then adds to his definition of spiritual formation, “Spiritual formation, I have come to believe, is not about steps or stages on the way to perfection. It’s about the movements from the mind to the heart through prayer in its many forms that unite us with God, each other, and our truest selves.”<sup>10</sup> One form of prayer that moves us toward “our truest selves” is restorative prayer.

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<sup>7</sup> Terry Wardle, *The Transforming Path: A Christ-Centered Approach to Spiritual Formation* (Siloam Springs, AR: Leafwood Publishers, 2003), 12.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 12-13.

<sup>9</sup> Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Spiritual Formation, Following the Movements of the Heart* (New York: Harper One, 2010), xv.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., xvi.

The church, particularly the Protestant church, has tended to approach spiritual formation in a rational sense concerned with right thinking and doing more than a Spirit-led personal and interactive intimacy with the person of Christ that leads to peace. In this context, the common approach to discipleship and spiritual formation has been primarily one of outcome-based formation. In a recent study by the Barna Group, individuals were asked how they might define spiritual health, which is part of formation. The study reports, “One of the widely embraced notions about spiritual health is that it means ‘trying hard to follow the rules described in the Bible.’—81 % of self-identified Christians endorsed this statement, and a majority agreed strongly (53%).”<sup>11</sup> Practically speaking, spiritual formation has become behavioral modification.

If knowing and following Jesus is limited to the desire for behavioral change then the church has the same functional understanding of Jesus as those outside the church who may see him as a great moral teacher but not the source of life and wholeness. Jesus questioned his followers to see if they understood his identity and his ministry.

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”<sup>12</sup>

Christ was and is more than a moral teacher or a good man; he is the means of peace; he is God.

The practice of traditional disciplines alone is not enough to transform believers or provide lasting peace. Dallas Willard touches on the inability of

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<sup>11</sup> The Barna Group, “Many Churchgoers and Faith Leaders Struggle to Define Spiritual Maturity,” <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/264-many-churchgoers-and-faith-leaders-struggle-to-define-spiritual-maturity?q=define+spiritual+maturity> [accessed October 12, 2011].

<sup>12</sup> Mt 16:13-16 [NASB].

formational disciplines alone to transform believers. “The realities of Christian spiritual formation are that we will not be transformed ‘into his likeness’ by more information, or by infusions, inspirations, or ministrations alone.”<sup>13</sup>

A holistic model of spiritual formation includes a renewing of the mind, which, according to the Scriptures, happens only as believers present themselves to God. Paul instructs us in his epistle to the Romans:

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.<sup>14</sup>

Such healing and transformation is a process that manifests itself as holistic spiritual formation.

Another important product of holistic formation is the believer’s concept of the heart of God. If spiritual formation is limited to the practice or adherence to a regimen of traditional disciplines God appears as a watcher of behavior rather than a personal and compassionate presence. A recent article out of Gettysburg College on religious experience states that, while in some cases religious faith can help the believer to cope with stressful situations, it can also increase anxiety if the faithful sees God as demanding performance:

Some studies reveal that religious beliefs can lead to an increase in anxiety. One reason for this increase might be because religious beliefs or thoughts about God create a sense of being watched or controlled, which could create a concern for how an individual behaves in any given situation. Kirkpatrick (2005) contends that some people view God as a punishing and demanding figure that can see all. Bering (2006) and others (e.g., Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007) suggest that belief in

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<sup>13</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Rediscovering the Essential Teachings of Jesus on Discipleship* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 76.

<sup>14</sup> Rom 12:1-2 [NASB].

the supernatural watcher can bias feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. If God is watching, people could be concerned about the type of behavior they engage in of the private thoughts they have, both of which could increase anxiousness.<sup>15</sup>

Spiritual formation includes healing and healing includes spiritual formation. They are two sides of the same coin. Part of that healing rests in the believer's concept of God that sometimes requires healing.

The view of the researcher is that underlying issues cause individuals to limp through their Christian lives. These issues perhaps formed in childhood may disallow the experience of the peace of Christ and must also be addressed as part of spiritual formation. Holistic spiritual formation should include restorative prayer to deal with specific areas of past wounding and trauma of all kinds to be most complete and effective.

Henri J. M. Nouwen aptly defined Spiritual formation as, "The ever-increasing capacity to live a spiritual life from the heart."<sup>16</sup> (The researcher would add to Nouwen's definition that it is not merely a journey of enlarging the head or intellect but one of transforming the heart.) Spiritual formation is a journey, and the goal of that journey is the character and peace of Jesus Christ. It is the contention of the researcher that the heart's "ever-increasing capacity" to live that spiritual life is limited by unhealed areas and emotional pain. Thus, to see effective formation with lasting transformation, the heart requires healing or "unbinding."

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<sup>15</sup> Tina Toburen and Brian P. Meier, "Priming God-Related Concepts Increases Anxiety and Task Performance," *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 29, no. 2 (2010): 129.

<sup>16</sup> Henri J. M. Nouwen with Michael J. Christiansen and Rebecca J. Laird, *Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Walk of Faith* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 2006), xv.

For many believers, years of biblical counseling and practice of traditional disciplines and traditional spiritual formation have not always resulted in transformation and inner peace but rather a more performance-based spirituality. Spirituality has become more cognitive than spiritual—more about conformity to structures and doctrine than intimacy with God.

Spiritual formation, the personal journey toward wholeness and Christ-like character affects believers on many levels. Curt Thompson describes Christian culture and belief. “Our Christian faith seems to be mostly a cognitive assent to a series of rational beliefs that don’t seem to help us resolve our family conflicts, our struggles with sexuality, our sense of isolation, or our ongoing burden of shame and guilt.”<sup>17</sup>

It is the contention of the researcher that a holistic model of spiritual formation includes prayer which identifies sources of emotional pain and restores hearts and minds wounded and limited by past hurts and trauma of all types. The inclusion of healing prayer as a normative part of spiritual formation makes other spiritual practices even more effective. This holistic model being pursued will emphasize integration, community and scriptural integrity.

### Integration

An integrated model of holistic model of spiritual formation will include activity for both the left and right hemispheres of the brain. Curt Thompson, a practicing psychiatrist, summarizes the functions of each hemisphere. The distinction between the

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<sup>17</sup> Curt Thompson, *Anatomy of the Soul: Surprising Connections Between Neuroscience and Spiritual Practices that Can Transform Your Life and Relationships* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010), 15.

hemispheres of the human brain corresponds in a very general way to the linear and the visual aspects of formation.

As you may know, your brain is made up of a left and a right hemisphere. While both sides of the brain are involved in just about every activity, the two hemispheres function differently. The left hemisphere processes in a logical and sequential manner; the right hemisphere processes in a more intuitive and holistic way. The two hemispheres function best, however, when they are integrated. In fact, neuroscience confirms much of what Scripture teaches us about the importance of living with undivided hearts and minds.<sup>18</sup>

God did not intend the law of the Ten Commandments to substitute for a relationship with him. He did not simply issue a systematic list of logical, linear, literal dictates intended to speak only to the Hebrews' left brains. In other words, Moses is not simply asking the Hebrews to remember facts about the past, which would involve only their hippocampi. Instead, they are to engage in actions that integrate their right and left hemispheres.<sup>19</sup>

The call is for integration in approaching God. This integration from a neuro-physiological perspective also represents God's heart for man to live in peace or shalom for which a simple definition would be everything connected and working together.<sup>20</sup> This integrated approach to God has been lopsided tending toward the rational and linear approaches to formation. In later chapters the researcher will further develop the involvement of various parts of the human brain as they are affected in various spiritual practices and restorative prayer. Briefly stated, many of the traditional linear spiritual practices have tended toward the left hemisphere while restorative prayer, which involves the visual tools of the human brain, tend toward the right hemisphere. A holistic model would integrate both the linear and the visual centers of the brain.

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<sup>18</sup> Thompson, xvii.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>20</sup> šālōm, "Peace," in this case, means much more than mere absence of war. Rather, the root meaning of the verb šālēm better expresses the true concept of šālōm, Completeness, wholeness, harmony, fulfillment, are closer to the meaning. Implicit in šālōm is the idea of unimpaired relationships with others and fulfillment in one's undertakings. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 930.

The various Christian models of restorative prayer often involve the healing or reframing of memories. However, dwelling only on the wounds of the past absent other formational tools such as meditation and journaling can actually be detrimental to healing in that the subject may remain focused on past pain without the present hope of truth discovered inductively through subsequent spiritual practices. Daniel Amen writes, “When attention gets stuck on negative thoughts, hurts from the past, or anger, emotional or spiritual growth becomes arrested.”<sup>21</sup> It has been the policy of the researcher to require that those receiving care must, while engaging in healing prayer, simultaneously participate in the other spiritual practices such as meditation, reading Scripture, and journaling.

Integrated formation includes spiritual disciplines with healing: the integration of both the left and right hemispheres of the human brain. Western church culture tends toward the linear definition of spiritual formation. The researcher proposes to test a holistic model for spiritual formation that represents a healing and formational continuum. This model includes aspects that involve both linear and visual facets of the mind with Christ who is the believer’s example and shalom at the center.

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<sup>21</sup> Daniel Amen, *Healing the Hardware of the Soul: How Making the Brain-Soul Connection Can Optimize Your Life, Love, and Spiritual Growth* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2008), 46.

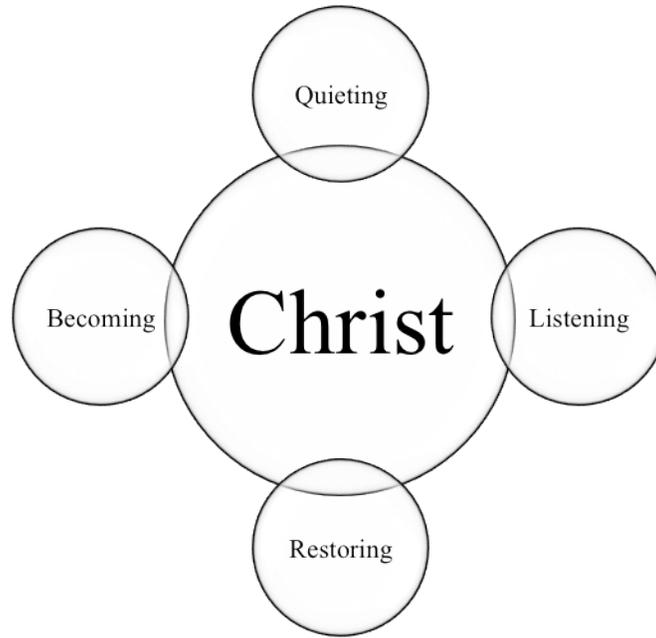


Figure 1.1 Formational Continuum<sup>22</sup>

### Community

Community is an indispensable part of spiritual formation. Believers are designed by God to heal together in community. Peter Scazzerro describes the effect and purpose of the healing community in his book *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*. “God’s intention, however, is that our local churches and parishes are to be places where, slowly but surely, we are re-parented on doing life Christ’s way. God intends that his new community of people be the place where we are set free.”<sup>23</sup> Freedom is the result of personal discovery of truth regarding God and mankind. Indeed, mankind is created for community where life can be shared and even wounded memories can be shared and regenerated.

<sup>22</sup> Gardner, 2012, (Figure designed by researcher for this study.)

<sup>23</sup> Peter Scazzerro, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: Unleash A Revolution In Your Life in Christ* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 104.

Curt Thompson discusses the function of the hemispheres of the brain stating that parts of our brains are attuned to others where we think more in terms of “we” than “me.” Thompson writes, “The right and left hemispheres of the brain also differ in their focus. The right is deeply aware of the present moment and the individual’s connection to all things—the state of “we.”<sup>24</sup>

### Scriptural Integrity

The researcher is using a model for the formational continuum which was inspired by a devotional reflection on the story of Lazarus in John 11:

So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been *dead* four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. I know that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me." When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."<sup>25</sup>

The emerging integrated model recalls four aspects of the Lazarus account:

1. Quieting. The model begins with practices pursuing the quieting of the mind as Lazarus who lay silently in the tomb.
2. Listening. This facet of the model reflects the words of Jesus saying, “Lazarus, come forth.” The focus is on listening and learning the voice of God through practices that bring an awareness of the personal presence of God.
3. Restoring. This facet of the holistic model represents the integration of

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<sup>24</sup> Thompson, 243.

<sup>25</sup> Jn 11:38-44 [NASB].

restorative prayer as a normative spiritual practice. Healing reflects the command of Jesus to the community around Lazarus to remove the grave clothes and remnants of death and our lives outside of Christ. In this practice the followers of Jesus will experience his personal presence and heal areas of past wounding and negative programming.

4. Becoming. When Jesus commands the community of Lazarus to “let him go,” Lazarus is released to continue his journey toward Christ reflecting growth in intimacy, Christ-like character and peace.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to integrate restorative prayer as a spiritual practice that results in greater spiritual and emotional wholeness and a lower level of anxiety in the life of the follower.

It is also true that deep healing can and does take place in the lives of anyone pursuing Christ through spiritual practices such as meditation or *lectio divina*, an ancient and reviving practice of meditation through the Scriptures. These practices will be defined in later chapters. Traditional spiritual practices are made more effective when root causes of emotional pain are identified so that truth finds a deeper place in the heart of the disciple of Christ.

Just as the various spiritual practices are made more effective by dealing with root causes of pain, so also restorative prayer must be applied and reinforced over time with the other spiritual practices to allow for transformation. Jesus instructed those who believed him to continue in his Word and thereby become free. “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, ‘If you continue in My word, then you are truly

disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'"<sup>26</sup> To continue is to walk out and reinforce truth through repetition.

The researcher seeks to present restorative prayer as a spiritual practice to be included with other traditional practices for both inward and outward formation, reflecting the journey Henri Nouwen describes as movements from the mind to the heart. The goal of this movement from mind to heart is personal shalom or wholeness evidenced by lower anxiety and greater personal peace.

### **Research Methodology to Study the Problem**

The study, development, and implementation of the holistic formational approach will be conducted through small groups that will pursue transformation through the use of several spiritual practices as seen through the life of Jesus Christ in his own formation. These will include the practices centered on solitude, listening, reflection, and what the researcher will define as the practice of restorative prayer for a period of forty days. There are two groups for the purpose of this study: one experimental group and a control group.

The Experimental Group will journey through and experience the spiritual practices including restorative prayer in a study group of twenty-four. There will also be a Control Group that does not experience either the healing formational prayer or the other prescribed spiritual practices. Each study group will be divided into sub-groups of three individuals who will maintain community for the duration of the forty-day study period.

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<sup>26</sup> Jn 8:31-33 [NASB].

The participants of these various study groups will be tested both at the beginning and the conclusion of the forty-day study period to gain quantitative data that measure anxiety and peace.

The forty-day period reflects a time of renewal, purgation, and transition from one state to another. The forty-day period is seen as important in many world religions including Buddhism, Islam, and the practice of yoga. The Bible is filled with examples of this forty-day period. In Genesis God sent rain for forty days to cleanse the earth. In Exodus Moses was in a place of transition and revelation in the presence of God for forty days upon the mountain. In the book of Numbers Israel spied out the Promised Land for forty days and when they chose to not trust God, they wandered one year for each day they had spied out the land. In 1 Kings Elijah traveled forty days to Mt. Horeb for an intimate encounter with the stillness in the heart of God. Jonah warned Nineveh for forty days until they believed and repented. In the synoptic gospels Jesus fasted and focused on the Father for forty days after his initiation into public ministry at baptism. Also in the gospels it was forty days from the resurrection of Jesus until his ascension, which allowed his disciples to grow into the reality of a risen and reigning Christ.

The forty-day period is also significant given that true healing is not a momentary event but takes a period of time to become established in the life of the follower.

Newburg and Waldman, researchers in neuroscience, have examined the neurological impact for spirituality of acquiring the reality of God through spiritual practice:

If you contemplate God long enough, something surprising happens in the brain. Neural functioning begins to change. Different circuits become activated, while others become deactivated. New dendrites are formed, new synaptic connections are made, and the brain becomes more sensitive to subtle realms of experience.

Perceptions alter, beliefs begin to change, and if God has meaning for you, then God becomes neurologically real.<sup>27</sup>

Donald C. Mann, a Christian business coach, describes the typical formation and integration of ideas into the human mind:

The subconscious mind is the seat of these memories that drive repetitive behavior. The cognitive mind is the filter and temporary storage place of memories, but the most they last is three to five days. This is why a student can "cram" for a school examination get 100% on the test, and then in three to five days later not remember anything.

To build a memory in the subconscious mind requires the building of biological neural connections in the subconscious neural cells. This process of building these biological neural connections occurs in response to repetition and emotional content.

At the fastest, it takes about four days of constant repetition for the brain to decide to grow a neural network to support that memory. It takes about twenty-one days of constant repetition for that biological neural connection to be fully built. Then it takes about forty days for that thought to become integrated into the thinking process.<sup>28</sup>

Forty is an important number. Healing and formation require time in both the spiritual and biological realms. The significance of this transitional period will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

The testing will include an existing anxiety scale as well as completion of an emotional profile. A comparison of the pre-post differences between the three groups will provide a measure of change.

In addition, the researcher will develop and conduct interviews of twelve participants chosen at random for the experimental and control groups. The interviews will capture the qualitative perceptions of the participants augmenting the quantitative data with rich interpretative information.

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<sup>27</sup> Andrew Newberg and Mark Robert Waldman, *How God Changes Your Brain: Breakthrough Findings from a Leading Neuroscientist* (New York: Ballantine books, 2009), 3.

<sup>28</sup> Donald C. Mann, "Tips for Unlocking the Human Mind," <http://ezinearticles.com/?Tips-for-Unlocking-the-Human-Mind&id=5710456> [accessed April 12, 2012].

### **Questions Guiding the Research**

This is a mixed methods research study that addresses three research questions:

1. What are the elements underlie a viable model for integrated spiritual formation?
2. How does an integrated model of spiritual formation including practices of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming affect the spiritual growth of believers?
3. Can a valid and reliable measure of growth toward the character and peace of Christ be developed?

### **Significance of the Research Project for the Broader Church**

The model of spiritual formation being developed in this study, which includes restorative prayer as a normative practice, will be biblically based and could appeal to all those who accept the Bible and the life of Jesus Christ as a model for wholeness. The research conducted will involve groups from several traditions including mainline denominations, evangelicals, and charismatic traditions. The study and the resulting model will be of use to the church as the basis for community participation as well as the individual members of the body.

It is the aim of the researcher to provide a formational rubric that can be used by those presenting the Word of God from the pulpit or classroom. The model which results from this study will aid followers of Jesus Christ to more fully allow those they direct to encounter the personal presence of God in their teaching of the Word.

### **Assumptions/Limitations in the Research Project**

1. A primary assumption will be that those participating in the study desire a deeper and transformational experience through personal spirituality. The study will be limited to those who profess a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ to whatever extent that can be described and determined.
2. The forty-day period of this study will be a limitation as the period is insufficient for a new lifestyle of ongoing spiritual formation leading to peace and transformation. The participants will be encouraged toward ongoing follow-up through holistic spiritual formation. A further limitation will be that much of the results will be based upon self-disclosure of the participants that will be subject to other factors not addressed in this study.

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this study, a definition of “spiritual formation” is derived from Paul’s letter to the Romans. “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”<sup>29</sup> Spiritual formation is the process of a spiritual-led movement of a disciple toward the character of Christ whose life expresses the good and pleasing and perfect will of God resulting in personal wholeness.

Based upon the preceding verse, “spiritual practices” or spiritual disciplines are those regular activities which, through their use, move believers toward revelation of the heart of God resulting in peace and transformation to Christ-like character. In this study

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<sup>29</sup> Rom 12:2 [NLT].

these practices are practices of solitude, practices of listening, practices of healing, and practices for transformation.

“Restorative prayer” is a Spirit-led practice in which believers are uncovering areas of past wounding and emotional programming that obscure the view of God and rob believers of intimacy with God which results in transformation and true peace. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will employ a model of restorative prayer that includes the healing of memories.

“Transformation” as understood in Romans 12:2 is movement toward and change of mind to one which represents the good and acceptable and perfect will of God as seen in the person of Jesus Christ.

“Peace” is not the absence of difficulty or challenge but the ability to focus on the presence and heart of God in the midst of all circumstances including the inevitable struggles encountered as human beings and believers in Jesus Christ.

### **Outline of the Research Project**

Chapter One defines the nature and scope of the research project. In this chapter the researcher provides a brief overview of the study introducing the research project and defining key terms and goals of the study. The study takes into account the traditional approach to spiritual formation and the need to expand the traditional approach to include restorative prayer. The chapter includes a description of both the quantitative and qualitative methods to be used along with assumptions and limitations of the study. The chapter discusses the impact on the broader church.

Chapter Two will include a theological perspective of spiritual formation that includes restorative prayer as a normative spiritual practice. The study will examine a

biblical view of spiritual formation and growth and describe how these have been expressed through the earliest days of the church and throughout its various movements and history that include figures and expressions centering on spiritual formation. Chapter Two will distill the necessity to expand the definition of spiritual formation to include the practice of Spirit-led restorative prayer.

Chapter Three will highlight the literature available on holistic spiritual formation as reflected by the formational continuum and discuss the models and practices used by major authors over the past centuries to the modern era. The discussion will include the definitions by various writers of spiritual formation along with their reflections of movement toward the good, the acceptable, and the perfect expression of the heart of God.

Chapter Four will outline and explain the methods of research as well as the instruments used in the study including the spiritual practices mentioned above. The chapter will provide a narrow focus of the results of the study including a discussion of limitations and assumptions. Both quantitative and qualitative instruments will be described in detail along with the method of interpretation of the results.

Chapter Five will provide a comparative analysis of the data received from the study and examine trends and insights. The chapter will review the initial problem statement and assumptions regarding spiritual formation that includes the practice of restorative prayer.

Chapter Six will report the findings and conclusions of the study and set forth a model for spiritual formation reflecting the biblical goal which is the expression of the good, acceptable and perfect will of God as seen in the character of Jesus Christ. The

study will result in a recommendation for the broader church including a printed model for such formation. Chapter Six will also describe avenues and recommendations for further research in the area of spiritual formation and wholeness.

## CHAPTER TWO

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

#### Introduction

Spiritual formation is the believer's journey toward the character and peace of Christ. Henry J.M. Nouwen describes formation: "Spiritual formation, I have come to believe, is not about steps or stages on the way to perfection. It's about the movements from the mind to the heart through prayer in its many forms that unite us with God, each other, and our truest selves."<sup>30</sup> Dallas Willard associates spiritual formation with the growth of the kingdom in the lives of believers. "Spiritual formation in Christ is the process by which one moves or is moved from self-worship to Christ-centered self-denial as a general condition of life in God's present and eternal kingdom."<sup>31</sup> Spiritual formation is about movement and growth toward the character and peace of Jesus Christ. As Dallas Willard points out, it is the movement of the present kingdom of God in the believer.

Jesus used the natural growth cycle as a metaphor for spiritual growth:

And He was saying, "The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows — how, he himself does not know. "The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. "But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Heart* (New York: Harper One, 2010), xv.

<sup>31</sup> Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002), 77.

<sup>32</sup> Mk 4:26-29 [NASB].

In this brief parable, the growth of the kingdom is expressed metaphorically as seed being planted, then sprouting a blade, then growing to mature grain that provides a harvest. That harvest is the reproduction of the seed that was planted to begin the continuum of growth. The soil produces the growth by itself, from the Greek word *automatos*, from which derives our English word, *automatic*. The various spiritual practices employed in our formational journey cultivate the soil of the soul to receive the seed, which is the life of Christ, and to see it sprout and grow, ultimately reproducing the same life from which it sprang. The harvest is the peace and character of Jesus Christ in the life of believers.

Everything that grows, whether physically or spiritually, moves along a simple continuum of growth just as Christ taught in the parable from Mark 4:26-29. A furrow is dug, and the seed is put into the soil, which is a position of *resting*. Then the seed interacts with the various chemicals in the soil with new life *awakening*. Awakening continues the process of *growing* to express the DNA of the life within the seed. When the plant grows to full stature, it develops more seeds *reproducing* the same life from which it sprang. This continuum of physical growth provides a metaphor for spiritual growth according to a formational continuum with practices of *quieting*, *listening*, *restoring*, and *becoming*.

The practices of quieting emphasize the believer's ability to be present with Christ. In the practices of listening the believer learns to identify and respond to the voice of Christ within him. The practices of restoring address obstacles to growth in the life of the believer through restorative prayer. Finally, in the practices of becoming, believers continue in the transformational journey toward the peace and character of Jesus Christ.



Figure 2.1 Formational Continuum

The simple chart below describes the goal of each of the dimension of the formational continuum in the life of the believer.

Table 1. 1 Dimensions of the formational continuum

<b>Spiritual practice</b>	<b>Believer's goal</b>
Quieting	Be present to Christ
Listening	Respond to Christ
Restoring	Remove obstacles
Becoming	Christ-centered living

The researcher has observed that much of what is defined as spiritual formation in the church is modification of behavior flowing along a linear path. The researcher asserts the need for an integrated model for spiritual growth moving along and among dimensions of a formational continuum. An integrated model for spiritual formation will involve both right and left hemispheres of the brain—both linear and intuitive aspects of the mind leading toward reproducing the character and peace of Jesus Christ.

The formational continuum represents dimensions that are dynamic, interrelated, and continuous. The researcher refers to this as a formational continuum because each of its dimensions blends into and depends upon the next. The sum of the components forms an integrated model leading growth in the peace and character of Christ. The researcher has used the account of the resurrection of Lazarus in the Gospel of John as a metaphor to represent the movement along the formational continuum toward a restored life.

The researcher has developed a model that moves along a formational continuum that includes the practices of quieting that leads to listening resulting in healing and movement toward becoming Christ-like. The model for the formational continuum highlighted in this project provides an organizational model for devotional spiritual practices, as well as a model for individual formational ministry sessions, and a general philosophy for spiritual living. This chapter will examine the movement toward this holistic model for spiritual formation in Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.

### **The Formational Continuum in Scripture and Theology**

The formational continuum is seen in part or in full throughout the Scriptures as well as the history of the church, even from its roots in the synagogue with its traditions of spiritual practice. This project will highlight spiritual practices that correspond with

the dimensions of resting, awakening, growing, and reproducing. In summary, there is a formational continuum of four dimensions applied through various spiritual practices.

The researcher presupposes the salvation experience as a necessary beginning of spiritual formation in the life of the believer. This salvation is a work of grace through the faith of the believer. The Apostle Paul wrote, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God.”<sup>33</sup> Christ had given the command, “Remove the stone”<sup>34</sup> representing the life-giving grace of God that does for Lazarus and for all believers what they cannot do for themselves. Paul, in several New Testament epistles, used the phrase, “while we were” which is analogous to the believer’s dead and unregenerate self; “while we were helpless”<sup>35</sup>; “while we were sinners”<sup>36</sup>; “while we were enemies”<sup>37</sup>; “while we were in the flesh”<sup>38</sup>; “while we were children in bondage”<sup>39</sup> These are all areas needing works of grace through the efficacious work of Christ. Ongoing sanctification or spiritual formation is begun and accomplished through Christ. Spiritual transformation and maturity occur as followers of Christ employ the practices along the formational continuum.

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<sup>33</sup> Eph 2:8 [NASB].

<sup>34</sup> Jn 11:39 [NASB].

<sup>35</sup> Rom 5:6 [NASB].

<sup>36</sup> Rom 5:8 [NASB].

<sup>37</sup> Rom 5:10 [NASB].

<sup>38</sup> Rom 7:5 [NASB].

<sup>39</sup> Gal 4:3 [NASB].

## Quieting

The formational continuum described by the researcher begins with practices that quiet the heart, presenting an empty vessel to be filled with the presence and Spirit of God. Quieting practices require the surrender of attention, affections, and priorities to the present moment with Christ. Only as these are surrendered to the presence of Christ can believers discern the voice of Christ calling them forth.

In the biblical account of the resurrection of Lazarus, the actual sequence of restoration began with Lazarus in a place of total separation in the quiet and darkness of the tomb reflecting spiritual practices of solitude and silence. The process that restores life to every cell of Lazarus begins in stillness or quiet.

Quieting practices emphasize solitude and silence with specific applications such as centering prayer, the breath prayer, or any practice that focuses on the present moment with Christ. Such practices bring the believer into a focus on the Christ within them. Writing on the spiritual practice of solitude, Kenneth Boa states, “Solitude is the most fundamental of the disciplines in that it moves us away, for a time, from the lures and aspirations of the world into the presence of the Father.... Silence is the catalyst of solitude; it prepares the way for inner seclusion and enables us to listen to the quiet voice of the Spirit.”<sup>40</sup>

Quiet is also a state where new life begins to emerge. Nouwen writes of solitude saying, “It is a place of conversion, the place where the old self dies and the new self is

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<sup>40</sup> Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 83.

born, the place where emergence of the new man and the new woman occurs.”<sup>41</sup> The practices of quieting are focused on being intensely present and aware of Christ until believers hear the beating of his heart within. The quieting practices are used for connection with God devotionally or in the context of formational prayer ministry sessions.

In the context of ministry sessions, the researcher has used several practices to reinforce the quieting aspect of the formational continuum to bring care receivers to awareness of the immediate presence of God. One simple and basic practice is to ask the receiver to sit quietly with his or her hands on their lap and to pay attention to the breath going in and out of their bodies. As the care receiver focuses on their breath, their respiration grows deeper and slower. This is often used in combination with a simple phrase from Scripture as a focal point or breath prayer. Richard Foster, in his landmark book on prayer, describes the breath prayer:

As Christians over the centuries have sought to follow the biblical injunction to “pray without ceasing,” they have developed two fundamental expressions of Unceasing Prayer. The one is more formal and liturgical; the other is more conversational and spontaneous. The first has its origin in the Eastern Christian hesychastic tradition and is usually called aspiratory prayer or breath prayer. The idea has its roots in the Psalms, where a repeated phrase reminds us of an entire Psalm, for example, “O LORD, you have searched me and known me” (Ps. 139:1). As a result, the concept arose of a short, simple prayer of petition that can be spoken in one breath, hence the name “breath prayer.”<sup>42</sup>

The phrase used by the care receiver in this quieting practice of breath prayer may be drawn from a verse of Scripture or even words from a hymn that is meaningful

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<sup>41</sup> Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart: Connecting with God Through Prayer, Wisdom, and Silence* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1981), 17.

<sup>42</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Prayer - 10th Anniversary Edition: Finding the Heart's True Home* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 122.

to the receiver. The phrase is meaningful as it touches a deep need with deep truth. It is suggested by the researcher that those engaging the formational continuum should follow a plan of daily meditative reading in Scripture. The receiver is simply to use the phrase that arises from their daily reading or perhaps a life verse such as, “My soul waits in silence for God”<sup>43</sup> or “Be still and know that I am God.”<sup>44</sup> The reader or care receiver may also be asked to allow images to come to mind from the Scripture, to “see the Scripture.” This visual practice is an important factor in experiencing the truths of Scripture.

Through meditative practice the believer can begin to personally experience the presence of the Spirit in the truth of Scripture beyond a mere understanding of the words. The words and images from this quieting practice can also be used as a safe place to return and focus if uncomfortable memories come to the surface. The use of this phrase is helpful as a landing point at the end of a prayer session. Times of spiritual practice inductive by the individual or in a ministry session are best when they begin and end in quiet for focusing or reflection.

The breath prayer, with its repetition of the scriptural phrase and visual imagery, can also be a way to practice the presence of God and to “pray without ceasing”<sup>45</sup> and to allow “the word of Christ richly dwell”<sup>46</sup> in the hearts of believers.” The breath prayer focuses on the present moment with God.

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<sup>43</sup> Ps 62:1 [NASB].

<sup>44</sup> Ps 46:10a [NASB].

<sup>45</sup> 1 Thes 5:17 [NASB].

<sup>46</sup> Col 3:16 [NASB].

Oftentimes providing a simple instrumental musical pad in the background encourages a focus on the presence of God for the prayer. A simple lit candle burning on the table can also be a reminder of the presence of God. Quieting practices focus the attention and the mind of the care receiver on the present moment with God allowing him to release distractions and come to a position of resting in Christ. Resting prepares the way for the practices of awakening and connection with the voice of God.

### Listening

The listening practices bring believers to the place of awareness of the voice of God. As the stone was rolled away and the obstacle to hearing the voice of Christ was removed, Jesus awakened his friend shouting, “Lazarus, come forth.” While the quieting practices bring attunement to the presence of Christ within and position believers to hear his heart, the listening practices break into the silence and connect believers to the voice of God. Some of these practices include, but are not limited to, listening prayer through which a care receiver listens to the inner voice of God, study and meditation in the Scriptures, and journaling. The chief vehicle for the listening practices is Scripture. “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”<sup>47</sup>

Another and more subjective listening practice is hearing the voice of God directly through images and impressions. These may be referred to as the *rhema* or received Word of God.

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<sup>47</sup> Heb 4:12-13 [NASB].

Those who heard the voice of God as recorded in Scripture heard him by the received words of what John Jefferson Davis refers to as *logopneumatic* (Word and Spirit). Jefferson writes:

This theory of knowledge had its origins in the apostle's encounter with the risen Christ on the Damascus road and his own personal reception of the Spirit (Acts 9:17-18). Because of these life-changing experiences, Paul knew that he himself was a new creation (2 Cor 5:17) and that his new mind has been transformed to look at the world in a fundamentally new way (cf. Rom 12:2). Paul's transformed theory of knowledge that I am calling logopneumatic doctrine, because of the central roles played in it by revealed words of God and the Holy Spirit, transcends the limits of theories of knowledge of this age, which could be described by the terms *empiricism* and *rationalism*.<sup>48</sup>

A common context for hearing the voice of God through a *rhema* word may be meditation on nature. The Psalmist writes:

The heavens proclaim the glory of God.  
The skies display his craftsmanship.  
Day after day they continue to speak;  
night after night they make him known.  
They speak without a sound or word;  
their voice is never heard.  
Yet their message has gone throughout the earth,  
and their words to all the world.<sup>49</sup>

Paul tells believers, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made."<sup>50</sup> Therefore, nature and created things can bring a powerful awareness of the nature of God. A person may take a walk by a serene lake or watch a sunset or consider the beauty of a redwood forest. All point to God.

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<sup>48</sup> John Jefferson Davis, *Meditation and Communion with God: Contemplating Scripture in an Age of Distraction* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012), 91.

<sup>49</sup> Ps 19:1-4 [NLT].

<sup>50</sup> Rom 1:20 [NASB].

Another important aspect of the listening practices is identity. Jesus calls forth his beloved friend by name saying, “Lazarus, come forth!”<sup>51</sup> Lazarus was referred to as beloved several times in the gospel narrative (John 11:3, 5, 35). So it is not just listening but listening within the context of personal identity as the beloved of God. Listening becomes an act leading to transformation.

Jesus connects with the Father on the basis of identity as well. The first words heard through the gospel narrative from God the Father to Jesus the Son are a declaration of identity and purpose. “Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, ‘You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.’”<sup>52</sup> Also, upon the mount of transfiguration, the Father speaks to the identity of Jesus the Son of God from the midst of a cloud. “Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them and a voice came out of the cloud, ‘This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!’”<sup>53</sup>

It has been the researcher’s experience that many of the issues plaguing those coming for ministry are related to their understanding of their identity in Christ. Many followers may know but do not yet believe they are loved by God. The identity of the follower of Christ as the beloved of God must be personally experienced as truth descends from the mind into the heart. In quietness and listening, the follower of Christ experiences truth beyond rational knowing to the conversion of heart. In the analogy of

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<sup>51</sup> Jn 11:34 [NASB].

<sup>52</sup> Lk 3:21-22 [NASB].

<sup>53</sup> Mk 9:7 [NASB].

the resurrection of Lazarus, it is not enough for Lazarus merely to be alive and standing bound at the mouth of the tomb. He must be unbound and released from the grave clothes, the remnants of death and the tomb. In an integrated process of spiritual formation, the follower of Christ goes from being held by the grave clothes to being held by Christ as he hears his voice calling him by name through the listening practices to continue the journey toward the peace and character of Christ.

### Restoring

The restoring practices of the formational continuum represent the integration of restorative prayer as a normative spiritual practice that removes obstacles to growth by a Spirit-led process that goes to the root causes of emotional pain from wounding or the results of past sin. This is like removing rocks, roots, and weeds from a patch of garden. These obstacles inhibit the ability to see and follow Jesus; disciples cannot follow whom they cannot see. Matthew records the healing of two men who were moved out of blindness by the personal presence of Christ:

As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed Him. And two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” The crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried out all the more, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!” And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, “What do you want Me to do for you?” They said to Him, “Lord, *we want* our eyes to be opened.” Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.<sup>54</sup>

Jesus addressed the blindness of these two men who sat at the gates of Jericho. Only the personal presence of Jesus Christ was able to heal their blindness and move them from beggars to followers. Saint Augustine comments on the metaphor of spiritual

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<sup>54</sup> Mt 20:29-34 [NASB].

blindness as a metaphor stemming from the physical blindness that Jesus healed in the biblical account:

Our whole business then, Brethren, in this life is to heal this eye of the heart whereby God may be seen. To this end are celebrated the Holy Mysteries; to this end is preached the word of God; to this end are the moral exhortations of the Church, those, that is, that relate to the correction of manners, to the amendment of carnal lusts, to the renouncing of the world, not in word only, but in a change of life: to this end is directed the whole aim of the Divine and Holy Scriptures, that that inner man may be purged of that which hinders us from the sight of God.<sup>55</sup>

Restorative prayer is a distinctive of integrated spiritual formation as it directly addresses areas of needed healing. The prayer of restoration is elsewhere referred to as inner healing or formational prayer. The researcher asserts that restorative prayer practiced along with the other spiritual practices leads to spiritual and emotional transformation. In restoration, the believer experiences the personal presence of Jesus Christ in areas of needed healing. Restorative prayer is similar to the unbinding of Lazarus from the grave clothes of the past.

Adam Clarke comments on the restoration of life through the command of Jesus to unbind Lazarus in John 11:44:

He would have the disciples and those who were at hand take part in this business, that the fullest conviction might rest on every person's mind concerning the reality of what was performed. He whom the grace of Christ converts and restores to life comes forth, at his call, from the dark, dismal grave of sin, in which his soul has long been buried: he walks, according to the command of Christ, in newness of life; and gives, by the holiness of his conduct, the fullest proof to all his acquaintance that he is alive from the dead.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Augustine of Hippo, "Sermon 38 on the New Testament," <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/160338.html> [accessed 12/10/2012].

<sup>56</sup> Adam Clarke, "Clarke's Commentary the New Testament, John through Acts," <http://www.theologytools.com/PDF/CalvinPDFLibrary/Adam%20Clark%20NT%20John-%20Acts.pdf> [accessed 3/13/2013].

While the aspect of community is not a classical spiritual practice, it is vital in hearing and growing in God. Jesus directed the community of Lazarus to remove the stone and the grave clothes. Community helps to remove the grave clothes of the past as personal stories are shared.

On one occasion, as chronicled in the gospels, some desperate friends brought a sick member through impenetrable crowds to the source of healing. The outcome as always was restoration in the intimate presence of Christ.

And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. Being unable to get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."<sup>57</sup>

Believers dig holes through obstacles to intimacy with Christ through intercession, restoring prayer, and sharing life's journey in community stories. Ruth Haley Barton, refers to community as an important factor in healing and transformation:

It is impossible to overstate the importance of community in the spiritual transformation process. This is not the same thing as the Christian busyness that often accompanies church life; it is about quietly sharing the journey with others who are also drawn to deeper levels of spiritual transformation that enable them to discern and do God's will. As noted earlier, Jesus chose a spiritual community to accompany him on his spiritual journey on this earth, and he defined his spiritual community as those who were willing to seek out and do the will of God (Mark 3:33-34).... They ate together, traveled together, slept out under the stars together, ministered together, talked, asked questions, argued and challenged each other.... They stayed together under duress, conflict, betrayal and even death, seeking to do the will of God and to become more like Jesus in the process. In the crucible of community they were shaped and molded to become the future leaders of the church.... They were changed as individuals, and ultimately they changed the world through the inauguration of a new kind of relationship with God through the person of Christ. Taking a closer look at the relational rhythm of Jesus' life, we notice that within the small group of twelve there were three disciples with whom he was especially intimate. These three he invited to be with him in his most private moments of grief and agitation in the

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<sup>57</sup> Mk 2:3-5 [NASB].

Garden of Gethsemane. Even though they failed him significantly then, Jesus' request to them show that he was in touch with his need for intimate friendship and spiritual support.<sup>58</sup>

The community of faith is a source of re-contexting the past as believers tell share the steps of the formational journey. The voice of God can be heard in the context of community through spiritual gifts such as words of knowledge and wisdom. “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit.”<sup>59</sup> Paul teaches that members of the community have the ability to express the voice and heart of God to one another. “Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another.”<sup>60</sup>

Individuals seeking healing from controlling emotional pain have been able to hear directly from Christ through the process of uncovering wounded memories. Many times emotional pain in the present lives of believers can be traced to memories where lies have been implanted due to trauma or other conditioning. In the process of restorative prayer, the care receiver is led by the Holy Spirit to uncover wounded memories and acknowledge the presence of God in those memories. Often, simply uncovering a wounded memory reveals a source of emotional pain where significant healing takes place. Some who receive restorative prayer experience a sense of the presence of God through the Holy Spirit as they recall a wounded memory frame. Other

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<sup>58</sup> Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2006), 15-16.

<sup>59</sup> I Cor 12:8 [NASB].

<sup>60</sup> Eph 4:25-26 [NASB].

times the care receiver envisions Christ in the memory frame and that impression communicates a healing truth to the care receiver. These prayer sessions are reinforced with Scripture during and after the actual healing moments in the wounded memories.<sup>61</sup> Care-receivers learn to meditate on the Scriptures to continue in healing.

Henri J.M. Nouwen suggests that believers have been wounded in the past and these wounds have caused emotional pain that must be healed. “Your pain is deep, and it won’t just go away. It is also uniquely yours, because it is linked to some of your earliest life experiences. Your call is to bring that pain home. As long as your wounded part remains foreign to your adult self, your pain will injure you as well as others.”<sup>62</sup>

As previously stated, the prayer of restoration often involves the healing of memories. Greg Boyd comments on the renewal of the memory:

... [I]f we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom.12:2), we may need to be transformed by the renewing of our memories. By taking us back to times and places where the serpent first lied to us about who we are, who God is, and what life is about, Jesus is able to unveil the truth of who God is, who we are, and what life is about. He destroys the deception of the flesh by manifesting the truth about God, us, and life at the place we first bought into the deception!<sup>63</sup>

There is a biblical precedent for healing of memories. Sometimes the believer must to go back in order to move ahead in life and relationship with God and man. Simon Peter, the intimate follower of Jesus Christ, came to a place of personal crisis motivated by the shame of his denial. Peter denied three times being a follower or even knowing

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<sup>61</sup> The researcher has used his own work, *The Healing Journey, An Interactive Guide to Spiritual Wholeness* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image publishers 2006).

<sup>62</sup> Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey Through Anguish to Freedom* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 88.

<sup>63</sup> Gregory A. Boyd, *Seeing Is Believing: Experience Jesus through Imaginative Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book Group, 2004), 115-116.

Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of John.<sup>64</sup> These three denials took place by a “charcoal fire”<sup>65</sup>. Then, following the crucifixion, Jesus restored and commissioned Peter three times by a charcoal fire asking him, “Do you love Me?” (John 21:15-19). Charles H. Kraft comments on the restoration of Peter. “Jesus, in a very tender way, took Peter back to the past. He did not try to get Peter to deny or forget that horrible evening. Rather, Jesus gently healed the memory so that what had been a gaping open wound was turned into a healed scar.”<sup>66</sup>

James L. Resseguie comments on the important verbal thread in these two passages. “The verbal thread of a “Charcoal fire” ties the two antithetical events together: Peter’s professed love for Jesus reverses his desertion. The verbal repetition clarifies for the reader that denial is not the end of the story.”<sup>67</sup> In a sense, Jesus took Peter back to the scene of his failure and restored him. This example in the Gospel of John provides a suggestion that the emotional pain experienced in the present lives of believers can be healed. Furthermore, revisiting the memory and acknowledging the presence of God through the power of the Holy Spirit can remove an obstacle to intimacy with God.

Another example of going back to go ahead is God’s Word to Jacob after years of unrighteous servitude. “Then God said to Jacob, ‘Arise, go up to Bethel, and live there; and make an altar to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother

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<sup>64</sup> Jn 18:17, 25, 26 [NASB].

<sup>65</sup> Jn 18:18 [NASB].

<sup>66</sup> Charles H. Kraft, *Deep Wounds Deep Healing: Discovering the Vital Link Between Spiritual Warfare and Inner Healing* (Ann Arbor: Servant Publications, 1993), 19.

<sup>67</sup> James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 43.

Esau.”<sup>68</sup> God was taking Jacob back to the place of a personal encounter in order prepare him for what was ahead. Jacob declared, “Let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.”<sup>69</sup>

The psalmist invited God to search for the anxious ways in him. In Psalm 139, David, the shepherd psalmist, prays, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.”<sup>70</sup> There is an uncovering of the “hurtful way” and the leading into an “everlasting way.” This is a good description of the restoring facet of the formational continuum.

There are many models of healing or restorative prayer that the researcher referenced in Chapter One. In a model of restorative prayer developed and practiced by the researcher in *Healing the Wounded Heart*, readers/subjects are led through a process of uncovering obstacles to intimacy with God through following negative emotions to their source. The source is often a childhood wounding experience that has implanted beliefs not reflective of the truth of God. The presence of God is acknowledged in the time of wounding. As the care-receiver recognizes the presence of God in the wounded memory, the truth is received, healing begun, offenders forgiven, vows broken, and spiritual strongholds removed.

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<sup>68</sup> Gn 35:1 [NASB].

<sup>69</sup> Gn 35:3 [NASB].

<sup>70</sup> Ps 139:23-24 [NASB].

## Becoming

When Jesus commands the community of Lazarus to “let him go,” Lazarus is released to continue his journey toward Christ with an unobstructed view of Jesus. The becoming dimension of the formational continuum focuses on the believer’s ongoing journey toward the character and peace of Jesus Christ. This dimension of the formational continuum, as stated in Chapter One, is a process of establishing new beliefs, habits or as Psalm 23 puts it, “paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells believers that it is not enough to merely acquire truth, but to continue in truth in order that it becomes personal truth. “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, ‘If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.’”<sup>71</sup>

Integrated spiritual formation is a work of sanctification for the believer—a making holy or setting apart to the intimate availability and transforming presence of Christ. Sanctification moves believers from self-centeredness to Christ-centeredness. The practices of becoming allow the believer to continue the journey toward wholeness.

Wayne Grudem wrote about the ongoing work of sanctification:

Even though the New Testament speaks about a definite beginning to sanctification, it is also a process that continues throughout our Christian lives... their task as Christians is to grow more and more in sanctification, just as they previously grew more in sin. “For just as you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now yield your members to righteousness for sanctification.” (Rom 6:19).<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Jn. 8:31-33 [NASB].

<sup>72</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrines: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 327-328.

Paul, in his final greetings in 1 Thessalonians, describes his desire that followers of Jesus Christ would be entirely sanctified. “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.”<sup>73</sup> The work of sanctification is then an ongoing work that is accomplished by Christ as believers yield themselves to him in every aspect. Sanctification then call for an integrative approach to formation.

An integrated model for spiritual formation works on the whole person, right and left, linear and intuitive aspects. With the integrated model believers experience the fullness of Christ.

### **The Formational Continuum in Scripture**

The practices of the formational continuum moving from quiet, to listening, to restoring, to becoming can be seen in the account of creation itself:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.<sup>74</sup>

Creation, the formation of the earth, begins in primordial quiet, and then is interrupted by the voice of *Elohiym* commanding, “Let there be light.” The Spirit of God vibrates over the darkness activating the desire of *Elohiym*, and then the light bursts forth. The void is being transformed. “And there was light.” This light, just as the presence and voice of Christ, begins the process of unbinding and releasing all kinds of life from the

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<sup>73</sup> 1 Thes. 5:23-24 [NASB].

<sup>45</sup> Gn. 1:1-5 [NASB].

formless void. Quiet gives way to the voice that releases life and transformation: the formational continuum.

The formational continuum with practices moving from quiet, to listening, to restoring, to becoming is reflected many times in Scripture. One notable example is the opening stanza of the well-known twenty-third Psalm that the researcher has used for individual ministry appointments:

The Lord is my shepherd,  
I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside quiet waters.  
He restores my soul;  
He guides me in the paths of righteousness  
For His name's sake.<sup>75</sup>

This psalm begins with a focus on the image of the shepherd who quiets and satisfies his flock as he brings them to rest in green pastures.

God is referred to in the Old Testament many times as Shepherd and the people of God as his flock:<sup>76</sup>

But He led forth His own people like sheep  
And guided them in the wilderness like a flock;  
He led them safely, so that they did not fear. . .<sup>77</sup>

In the New Testament, Jesus refers to himself as the “good shepherd” whose voice is familiar to the sheep. "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his

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<sup>75</sup> Ps. 23:1-3 [NASB].

<sup>76</sup> See also, Gn 48:15, 49:24; Ps 28:9, 74:1, 77:20, 78:71, 79:13, 100:3; Is 40:11; Ez 34:11-31.

<sup>77</sup> Ps 78:52-53 [NASB].

voice.”<sup>78</sup> The focus of the sheep is the familiar and trusted voice of the shepherd.

Through time the sheep know and trust the voice of the shepherd.

By listening to the voice of the shepherd the sheep are led to the quiet or “waters of restfulness.”<sup>79</sup> Quiet or stillness is not the absence of sound as much as it is the presence of security as reflected in the Hebrew word *menuwach*, translated in Psalm 23 as “quiet.” The Hebrew root *nûah* relates to absence of spatial activity and presence of security.<sup>80</sup> This same Hebrew word refers to the security of the sheepfold. There is the hushing reassurance of the presence of the shepherd who leads his flock to safety.

There is a unique bond between shepherd and sheep as their life is connected to recognizing his voice. The good shepherd said, “I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me.... My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”<sup>81</sup>

He restores my soul, literally “turns my soul toward him.”<sup>82</sup> The shepherd leads the sheep to quiet in the green pasture and beside the waters of restfulness. As the sheep are focused in the quieting, they are arrested by the voice of the shepherd and are led into “paths of righteousness for his name sake.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Jn 10:3-4 [NASB].

<sup>79</sup> Abraham Cohen, *Soncino Books of the Bible: The Psalms* (New York: The Soncino Press, 1992), 67.

<sup>80</sup> R. Laird Harris, ed., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), Vol. 2:1322.

<sup>81</sup> Jn 10:14-15, 26-27 [NASB].

<sup>82</sup> The Hebrew word translated “restore” is from the root *shuv*, literally to turn or turn back.

<sup>83</sup> Ps 23:3 [NASB].

The Hebrew word for path here, *magal*, suggests a cyclical pattern with the root *gal*, the simple Hebrew word for circle.<sup>84</sup> Believers live in these circles of thought and behavior that have no life in them much as sheep and shepherd may have been grazing in exhausted pastures. Seeing that former pastures are depleted, the shepherd leads them toward new and life-giving pastures as any good shepherd would. The leading into new paths of righteousness reflects the concept of neuroplasticity discussed in the previous chapter. The new circular pathway of spiritual growth is not established over a single traversal but is formed over many times of following the voice of the shepherd.

The psalmist says that the new cycles of spiritual growth are “paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” For believers, as the flock of God, these are paths that agree with the truth of God and ones that will lead us toward “his name’s sake”—toward becoming and expressing the truth and character of the shepherd. As the shepherd brings the believer to quiet, he listens to his voice and is led in new path, restoring and turning him toward the shepherd, to become like him.

Another reflection of the formational cycle of spiritual growth is the story of Elijah and his encounter with the living God on the summit of Horeb. Driven by fear into the wilderness of Judah, the prophet Elijah is strengthened by bread and water provided by the angel of Yahweh. These are figures of grace beyond the ability of the prophet. The angel then leads the prophet for forty days to Horeb, the mountain of God. Elijah encountered God as he dwelt on the mountain.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> *ma`gal*, a track, from the root *gal*, circular. Harris, 644.

<sup>85</sup> 1 Kgs 19:1-13 [NASB].

Elijah, who was lost to the purpose and presence of Yahweh by the threats of Jezebel<sup>86</sup>, is brought to the quiet and separation of a cave on the mountain of God. The Scripture text says that Elijah “lodged there.” The prophet settled into the quiet and separation of the cave positioned to hear the voice of Yahweh.

Yahweh begins the process of restoration to draw the fear out of the heart of Elijah asking, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” or literally, “What is this place to you?” Then in the quiet of the cave the Lord summons him to audience “... [T]he word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Where upon Elijah states his fear, “I am alone.”<sup>87</sup> Again, as with the story of Lazarus, or the shepherd in the twenty-third Psalm, the aspect of identity arises in listening to the voice of God. Yahweh addressed the prophet by his personal name, “Elijah.” In Elijah’s reply to God’s question, a lie is brought to the surface: “I am alone.”

Now Yahweh passes by Elijah as he did with Moses in Exodus 34:1-7, and his voice is heard. “And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing.”<sup>88</sup>

The formational continuum of spiritual growth for Elijah began in the quiet of the cave that led to his listening to the voice of Yahweh. In that time of listening, God portrays the inner storm of Elijah’s fear with the earthquake, the wind, and the fire, but

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<sup>86</sup> 1 Kgs 19:2 [NASB].

<sup>87</sup> 1 Kgs 19:10 [NASB].

<sup>88</sup> 1 Kgs 19:11-12 [NASB].

once again, the voice of God that arrests the heart of the prophet comes in the sound of gentle blowing. This was the true and transforming voice of God that uncovered the fear in the heart of the prophet.

When the LORD asked Elijah the question, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” Elijah responds with a lie he believes, “I am alone.”<sup>89</sup> As Yahweh spoke, he unbound Elijah from this lie that leads to fear. The hushing sound of God’s truth penetrated the outer earthquake of the prophet’s fear and restored his perspective. When Elijah heard the sound of stilling he stepped out to the mouth of the cave and placed his mantle over his face.<sup>90</sup> Elijah’s mantle was his calling and life’s purpose that were now being restored. Now, Elijah continued on his way to anoint two kings and his own successor, Elisha.<sup>91</sup> There is a transformation and an added role for Elijah to that of spiritual father to Elisha.

The integrated sequence is laid out in the story of Elijah. The quiet of the cave leads to listening to the voice of Yahweh that in turn surfaces a lie and leads to the healing truth and restoration spoken in the gentle blowing.

### The Formation of Jesus Christ

Jesus is the goal and the perfect model concerning spiritual formation. Jesus, though fully God, was also fully human and experienced the formational journey as a human as seen in Luke’s Gospel:

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<sup>89</sup> 1 Kgs 19:10 [NASB].

<sup>90</sup> 1 Kgs 19:13 [NASB].

<sup>91</sup> 1 Kgs 19:16 [NASB].

Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it, but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You." And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.<sup>92</sup>

The Gospel of Luke refers to the spiritual growth of Jesus as a human. That Jesus grew in “wisdom” and “favor with God” suggests that there was an aspect of his development, at least during his childhood and adolescence, which required guidance, assistance, prodding, and the formation of godly habits. The verb Luke uses for “grew” is in the imperfect tense, denoting that his growth was continuous and ongoing, not a onetime event.<sup>93</sup> Similar terms are used of Samuel. “Now the boy Samuel was growing in stature and in favor both with the LORD and with men.”<sup>94</sup> The growth of John the Baptist is expressed in similar terms. “And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel.”<sup>95</sup> The growth in stature or wisdom or favor comes first in connection to God. The

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<sup>92</sup> Lk 2:41-52 [NASB].

<sup>93</sup> Leslie T. Hardin, *The Spirituality of Jesus: Nine Disciplines Christ Modeled for Us* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2009), 15-16.

<sup>94</sup> 1 Sm 2:26 [NASB].

<sup>95</sup> Lk 1:80 [NASB].

believer's life becomes an expression of that intimate connection even in relationship with other people growing in the character and peace of Christ. Jesus, fully God was also fully human and was therefore also a reflection of the Jewish culture around him.

The fact that the text in Luke chapter two mentions that Jesus was twelve years old indicates that Jesus followed the formational traditions and teachings of Judaism. Jesus, an observant Jew, would have followed the same pattern or preparation as other young Jewish males. The Mishnah, a volume of Jewish traditions also referred to as the "oral law" and compiled around the time of Jesus, provides a picture of normal spiritual practice of Jewish youth:

At five years of age, one is ready for the study of the Written Torah, at ten years of age for the study of the Oral Torah, at thirteen for bar mitzvah [the religious coming-of-age ceremony], at fifteen for the study of halachot [rabbinic legal decisions], at eighteen for marriage, at twenty for pursuing a vocation, at thirty for entering one's full vigor.<sup>96</sup>

Jesus followed other spiritual practices familiar to his time and culture including solitude, study, submission, Sabbath, prayer, fasting, feasting, worship, and others both of the inward and the outward practices. This study focuses on the inner or devotional practices observed in the life and times of Jesus Christ. He is both the model and the goal of spiritual formation.

Note here also that though the formational continuum was expressed through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, he himself did not require healing or restoration. He was and is the Son of God. The formational continuum in the life of Jesus Christ began with quieting and listening that led to the restoration and transformation of those to whom he ministered.

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<sup>96</sup> Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 869.

Therefore the focus is the quieting and listening facets of the formational cycle of spiritual growth as seen in the life of Jesus Christ.

Jesus practiced prayer and solitude as his tradition dictated but with greater emphasis on the personal devotion to the presence of the Father. Examples of his practice of solitude are found throughout the gospels. “But He Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray.”<sup>97</sup> “And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.”<sup>98</sup> (See also Luke 9:18, Matthew 14:23, John 6:15).

One example of Jesus and quieting practices can be found in the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark. The Mishnah instructs all males regarding the reciting of the *Shema* as a devotional act both morning and evening, as the sun is coming up, and as it is going down. The *Shema* consists of several verses from the Torah: Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41.<sup>99</sup> The key verses most recognized and referenced by Jesus in the gospels are “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”<sup>100</sup>

The quieting practices of solitude and prayer can be easily seen in the gospels. Following a time when Jesus was in a synagogue observing the practice of Sabbath he healed and delivered a man oppressed by an unclean spirit then brought healing to Peter’s mother-in-law and many others at the door of Peter’s house:<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Lk 5:16 [NASB].

<sup>98</sup> Lk 6:12 [NASB].

<sup>99</sup> Neusner, 3.

<sup>100</sup> Dt 6:4-5 [NASB].

<sup>101</sup> Mk 1:21-37 [NASB].

“In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left *the house*, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.”<sup>102</sup> Jesus entered the place of quiet and solitude in order to hear the voice of the Father. For Jesus, the *Shema* was more than a religious exercise: it was the focus and purpose of his life. As a product of his separation to the Father, Jesus demonstrates the spiritual practice of submission by going to teach and heal where the Father directed him rather than searched for Him; they found Him, and said to Him, ‘Everyone is looking for preach there also; for that is what I came for.’”<sup>103</sup>

Often, words such as “mountain” or “alone” in the gospels are code words for Jesus’ spiritual practice of solitude and prayer. These times of connection to the Father were often parenthetical to great signs and miracles in the ministry of Jesus.

The apostles of Jesus were sent out before him on a mission. When they returned Jesus interrupted their progress report and called them to a time of quieting rest:

The apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught. And He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while." (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.) They went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves.<sup>104</sup>

Following the quieting rest, Jesus fed 5,000 people on a few loaves and fishes.<sup>105</sup> After feeding the 5,000, Jesus “departed to the mountain to pray”<sup>106</sup>. Then Jesus is seen walking on water by his affrighted followers.<sup>107</sup>

The account of Jesus being transfigured in the eyes of three of his close followers is another example of the formational continuum. Jesus went to the mountain to be alone with the Father, taking three of his close followers with him. While in that place of

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<sup>102</sup> Mk 1:35-36 [NASB].

<sup>103</sup> Mk 1:36-38 [NASB].

<sup>104</sup> Mk 6:30-32 [NASB].

<sup>105</sup> Mk 6:33-44 [NASB].

<sup>106</sup> Mk 6:45 [NASB].

<sup>107</sup> Mk 6:47-50 [NASB].

quieting connection, the Father declared the identity of the Son saying, “This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him!”<sup>108</sup> Following dramatic declaration of identity, Jesus descended from the mountain and found the desperate father of an epileptic or possessed child. He delivered him with a word and they gave glory to the greatness of God.<sup>109</sup> The dramatic deliverance began in the quietness of connection on the mountain that led to his listening to the Father’s declaration followed by the restoration of the young child.<sup>110</sup>

Jesus was the means of healing and restoration for the captivity of his people Israel. Following his baptism and the forty days of solitude of the wilderness, the Gospel of Luke records the entrance of Jesus into the synagogue to announce the purpose of his ministry: the deliverance of a bound people. Jesus quoted Isaiah 61:

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,  
Because the Lord has anointed me  
To bring good news to the afflicted;  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to captives  
And freedom to prisoners;  
To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.<sup>111</sup>

It was the mission of Jesus to be the voice of God in preaching the gospel to the bound and to unbind them giving them new sight and freedom to pursue God by his gracious intervention. The declaration of Jesus in the synagogue provides a good description of the prayer of restoration in which the wounded are touched by the personal presence of Christ in places of past wounding. Restoration prayer brings the voice of Christ to the lowest, darkest places where the wounded or afflicted are brought out of the

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<sup>108</sup> Lk 9:35 [NASB].

<sup>109</sup> Lk 9:43 [NASB].

<sup>110</sup> Lk 9:28-35 [NASB].

<sup>111</sup> Is 61:1-2a [NASB].

darkness and into the light of his presence. There is an unbinding of the brokenhearted, liberty and freedom to prisoners held under the influence of lies implanted at times of wounding. It is the personal presence of Christ who enters into the place of imprisonment to set the captives free.

### The Formational Journey in the Pauline Epistles

Facets of the formational cycle of spiritual growth can also be seen in the epistles of the New Testament. The Apostle Paul addresses the formation of the character of Christ in the lives of believers saying, “My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you.”<sup>112</sup> The apostle Paul discusses the ministry gifts in the body of Christ, he provides that the purpose of these collective gifts is to present “a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”<sup>113</sup>

Formation includes “laying aside the old self”<sup>114</sup> or the removal of the grave clothes of the pre-Christ life as described in the formational continuum:

So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.<sup>115</sup>

Three dimensions of the formational continuum may be seen in the above verses

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<sup>112</sup> Gal 4:19-20 [NASB].

<sup>113</sup> Eph 4:15-16 [NASB].

<sup>114</sup> Eph. 4:22 [NASB].

<sup>115</sup> Eph. 4:17-24 [NASB].

in Ephesians 4:

*Listening:* Believers who have heard and been taught in Christ are able to respond to his voice (21).

*Restoring:* As a result of hearing, believers lay aside the old self of corruption, removing the grave clothes of their lives before Christ (22).

*Becoming:* Believers put on a new self that is in the likeness of God and are being renewed in the spirit of their minds (23-24).

The formational continuum growth is seen throughout the Scriptures.

### **The Formational Continuum in History and Tradition**

There have been models of spiritual practice throughout the history of the church from its origin in the synagogue through the early church that point toward an integrated model reflecting the formational continuum. A representative of movement toward an integrated model of spiritual formation may be seen in the practice known as *lectio divina* or sacred reading.

What is *lectio divina*? Authors Christine Valters Paintner and Lucy Wynkoop provide a succinct definition. “Lectio is a slow, contemplative praying of the Scriptures, which leads us to union with God. It is an invitation to listen deeply for God's voice in Scripture and then to allow what we hear to shape our way of being in the world.”<sup>116</sup>

The purpose of sacred reading is transformation. It is done in an atmosphere of quiet focus on the Scriptures and the heart from which the Scriptures flow. *Lectio divina* allows us “to read for formation, not for information or entertainment value. Spiritual

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<sup>116</sup> Christine Valters Paintner and Lucy Wynkoop, *Lectio Divina: Contemplative Awakening and Awareness* (New York: Paulist Press, 2008), 1.

formation is the process of coming to know God and allowing God's vision and values to shape us.”<sup>117</sup> Michael Casey adds, “What are we doing in *lectio divina*? We are seeking God. We are hoping to hear God’s voice and do God’s will, but are operating in search mode ... our reading fundamentally is an expression of our desire for God.”<sup>118</sup> The spiritual practice of *lectio divina*, therefore, is one of seeking the heart of God in the Word of God with the goal of hearing his voice and becoming transformed into his image and likeness. This is moving toward integrated spiritual formation. It is an encounter with a heart greater than our own who leads believers to himself.

The practice of *lectio divina* is ancient with roots in the synagogue even in the time of Jesus Christ. Earlier this chapter referred to the occasion recorded in the Gospel of Luke, the fourth chapter, when Jesus read from the prophetic scroll of Isaiah 61. Meditative reading was a part of the synagogue service, a tradition with which Jesus would have been very familiar. Luke tells us that this was part of Jesus’ life saying, “And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him.”<sup>119</sup> Jesus was not unfamiliar with the traditions of the synagogue of his time. He was taking his place as a common member of the congregation and was known to the other members. Upon opening this passage a bit further, a fuller picture of what was happening emerges:

Jesus was asked by the ruler of the synagogue to act as the Sheliach Tsibbur

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<sup>117</sup> Painter and Wynkoop, 3.

<sup>118</sup> Michael Casey, *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina* (Ligouri, MO: Ligouri Publications, 1995), 8.

<sup>119</sup> Lk 4:16-17 [NASB].

(The representative of the people). For according to the Mishnah, the person who read in the synagogue the portion from the prophets, was also expected to conduct the devotions.... Then Jesus would ascend the Bema and, standing at the lectern begin the service with two prayers.... After this followed what may be designated as the Jewish Creed, called the Shema. This prayer finished, he would officiate. He took his place before the Ark and brought out the roll of the Law.... Upon the Law followed a section from the Prophets.... the reading of which was in olden times immediately followed by an address, discourse or sermon.<sup>120</sup>

Paintner and Wynkoop, trace *lectio divina* to the synagogue:

The roots of lectio can be found in the Jewish synagogue where the Naga, or meditation on the Hebrew Scriptures, is practiced by rabbis and their disciples: "To fix the sacred words in their minds and hearts they murmured them aloud like bees feeding on honey." The fathers of the church expanded the concepts of reading and speaking the *Scriptures* as prayer. In homiletics they sought the deeper or spiritual sense of the Scriptures.... The desert mothers and fathers believed that they heard God speaking to them, personally and immediately, through Scripture. They saw Scripture as a privileged place for encountering God.<sup>121</sup>

Putting both of the previous quotations together a picture of meditation or sacred reading emerges in the synagogue of Jesus' time. The people in the synagogue would have listened to Jesus reading and in concert have murmured his words back to him. One of the Hebrew words translated as meditation is *hagah*, which is to murmur.<sup>122</sup> This is a picture of what was going in the synagogue as Jesus Christ, the Word of God, read the portion of the Prophets, or *haphtarah*, concerning himself. Following this, Jesus, instead of giving a homiletical discourse, "He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

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<sup>120</sup> Benjamin D. William and Harold B. Anstall, *Orthodox Worship: A Living Continuity with The Temple, The Synagogue, and the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Light and Life Publishing, 1990), 20-21.

<sup>121</sup> Paintner and Wynkoop, 58-62.

<sup>122</sup> *Hagah*, "to meditate, moan, growl, utter, speak." This word is common to both ancient and modern Hebrew. From *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.

And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’”<sup>123</sup>

A key figure in the development of the practice of sacred reading was Saint Benedict (ca. 480-ca. 550). Saint Benedict developed what is referred to as the Rule, which described the monastic life of his order. Tony Jones adds to the historical development of *lectio divina*:

In the Rule, Benedict outlines life in a monastery, everything from the seven worship services daily to how to do the dishes. The three elements that guide the life of a Benedictine monk are prayer, work, and *lectio divina* . . . *Lectio divina* was articulated further by Guigo II (ca. 1115 - ca. 1198), the ninth prior of the Grand Chartreuse, a Carthusian order in France. In his book *Scala Claustralium* (the Ladder of Monastics), Guigo writes, One day I was engaged in physical work with my hands and I began to think about the spiritual tasks we humans have. While I was thinking, four spiritual steps came to mind: reading (*lectio*), meditation (*meditatio*), prayer (*oratio*), and contemplation (*contemplatio*). This is the ladder of monastics by which they are lifted up from the earth into heaven.<sup>124</sup>

The prayerful practice of *lectio divina* involves the repeated reading of a biblical text, each reading descending into deeper connection with God. The typical four readings include the following steps of *lectio*, *meditatio*, *oratio*, and *contemplatio*. These four steps reflect an integrated model for prayer similar to the formational continuum. The following is a comparison of *lectio divina* and the practices of formational continuum:

*The lectio* step requires slowly reading the Scripture text aloud. It is a posture of openness and expectation. This may be preceded by a time referred to as *silencio* when the reader quietly prepares to hear the Word of God. The researcher has likened *silencio*

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<sup>123</sup> Lk 4:20-22 [NASB].

<sup>124</sup> Tony Jones, *The Sacred Way: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 49-50.

as sitting on the edge of a chair in expectation waiting for the conversation to begin. In *silencio* we are detuning inner and outer noise. David Benner describes this facet of *lectio* prayer as attending the word “where we listen and wait for the still, small, voice of God that will speak to us personally and intimately.”<sup>125</sup> *Lectio* is the phase where the practitioner focuses on the text to watch and listen for a word or phrase or perhaps a mental image to arise from the text. This is a facet of quiet focus on the biblical text. *Lectio* reflects the practices of quieting which prepare the reader to hear the voice of God in the text.

The *meditatio* step is a subsequent reading of the biblical text in which the practitioner begins to chew on the Word. David Benner describes this prayer as pondering. “*Meditatio* is primarily a cognitive (head) and affective (heart) activity... It is more like pondering or reflecting.”<sup>126</sup> Benner suggests the response of Mary, the mother of Jesus’ response to the visitation by the angel of God where she is said to “have pondered all these things in her heart.”<sup>127</sup> Meditation reflects the practices of listening where the reader is allowing the words to enter into deeper realms of listening for a personal encounter.

The *oratio* step is a third reading of the scriptural text where the reader is reversing directions and responding to the source of the word. Benner describes this as prayer as responding. In meditation the biblical text touches the human heart. The reader may respond to God in many ways though most of these are prayerful responses. Benner

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<sup>125</sup> David Benner, *Opening to God: Lectio Divina and Life as Prayer* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2010), 53.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>127</sup> Lk 2:51 [NASB].

suggests these responses may include worship, lighting a candle, painting a picture, or writing a psalm.<sup>128</sup> In *lectio*, the practitioner comes to quiet focus allowing words, images or phrases to arise to awareness then begins to chew on them through *meditatio* step leading to grateful response as the Word of God touches deep places through *oratio*. Often, in the listening or meditational facet of *lectio divina* memories may come to the surface that offers opportunity for healing or restoration. An added element to be included in the restoring facet of the *lectio* practice is the individual's personal awareness of the presence of God or inner healing which may include the healing of memories that come to the surface during meditation. This is similar to the restoring practices of the Formational Continuum.

Michael Casey also suggests the connection and further descent into the heart that involves healing of memories. Michael Casey calls this "active reading." He says, "We need to slow down, to savor what we read, and to allow the text to trigger memories and associations that reside below the threshold of awareness."<sup>129</sup>

Note that when the researcher employs the practice of *lectio divina* as one of several platforms for restoration there is a further and intentional descent into interactive listening prayer. In a restoring facet of *lectio divina*, the researcher prays on behalf of the subject asking, "Lord, why does this cause this response in this person? Where is this response coming from?" The reader or facilitator asks the Lord to bring memories of wounds to the awareness of the subject. The reader acknowledges His presence in that place asking the subject to focus on the presence of God in that place of wounding. His

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<sup>128</sup> Benner, 54.

<sup>129</sup> Casey, 151.

presence is the Truth. He may speak or impress the reader with words or give a visual sense of his presence in that place of wounding. There is an arising awareness of the presence of Jesus in those memories and they are reordered according to the truth of God. Believers release the pain and lies to him and extend compassion and forgiveness to any involved. Often times this facet involves the healing of past memories though not always. Restoration does not always involve healing of memories. Restoration is about an experience with the presence and voice of Christ that results in transformation.

The *contemplatio* step is a soaking and continuing in the Word and truths revealed from the text and the Holy Spirit. Benner describes *contemplatio* as prayer as being. Benner comments, “In contemplatio we rest in the presence of the one whose word and presence have invited us to transforming embrace.”<sup>130</sup> This can be coupled with journaling or sharing in the faith community. In contemplation truth becomes transformation. *Contemplatio* reflects the practices of becoming in the formational continuum. Once a person has become quiet, listened to the heart of God resulting in unbinding or restoration, he continues to grow in the truth of what he has heard. Chapter One reminds that this transformation of the mind is not the product of a single action profound healing moment alone. Truth, which begins in a moment, must be continued in a process that previously defined as neuroplasticity.

Another historic reference pointing toward the value of holistic spiritual formation is found in Isaac Ambrose, a puritan writer in the 1600s. Ambrose was considered a contemplative in his attention to the presence of God as experience in practicing the spiritual disciplines. Writing on Ambrose’s use of spiritual disciplines, Tom Schwanda

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<sup>130</sup> Benner, 54.

describes what the researcher would consider as an integrated attitude toward spiritual formation. Ambrose combined spiritual practice with spiritual experience of the presence of God:

Ambrose's descriptive language on the effect of cultivating spiritual disciplines must not be ignored. He contends that a person who is faithful in practicing these spiritual duties will find their "hearts sweetly refreshed." This indicates a critical dimension in puritan piety that while their focus was always on the intellect they never excluded the effective dimension of the soul. In reality the Puritans challenge contemporary Christians with the much-needed balance between head and heart. On the one hand, some today are overly cognitive with little attention to how Scripture, worship or spiritual practices might affect them. To ignore the transformative power of these spiritual means is unwise since they are intended as reminders of God's presence and desire to be in communion with us.<sup>131</sup>

Saint Ignatius of Loyola was another key figure whose Spiritual Exercises combined the written Word with the sanctified imagination:

The one who most profoundly thought through the role of imagination in prayer during the Middle Ages and Renaissance—and arguably in any other period—was St. Ignatius of Loyola. Throughout his *Spiritual Exercises* (1548) Ignatius called for practitioners to use their imaginations in prayer to further their spiritual growth. He suggested that people begin their spiritual exercise by "seeing by the power of imagination" the place where their interaction with the Lord will take place. It may be a biblical scene, a memory, or some other place constructed by the imagination. They were to compose themselves in this imaginative place, entering into it as vividly as possible before proceeding on.<sup>132</sup>

Ignatius led those whom he directed through the Gospels in the accounts of the love of God, the life of Christ, the passion of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ. As they journeyed through the text they were encouraged to experience the written word through their imaginations connecting with the senses. He began in a safe meeting place within the mind or heart of those he directed and had them connect not only with the

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<sup>131</sup> Tom Schwanda, "Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care," <http://metis.findlay.edu:3356/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&hid=3&sid=23bd06bd-9da3-46ff-9dd8-1886d2ed1645%40sessionmgr1> [accessed November 4, 2012].

<sup>132</sup> Gregory A Boyd, *Seeing Is Believing: Experience Jesus through Imaginative Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2004), 92.

word but the heart of God in the word. In this connection they found the peace and character of Jesus Christ.

In more recent history, a major influence on holistic spiritual practice has been Richard Foster who has revived many classical practices through his many writings. Foster, who teaches spiritual formation and prayer, also refers to healing the entire person. Foster recalls a session of formational prayer with a man who suffered from depression and what would today be referred to as post-traumatic stress disorder. Foster recalls the account and result of the prayer session with a man he described as atheist. He records his surprising healing prayer session:

I said, “Don’t you know that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who lives in the eternal now, can enter that old painful memory and heal it so that it will no longer control you?” He did not know this was possible. I asked if he would mind if I prayed for him—never mind that he was an atheist; I would have faith for him. He nodded his consent. Sitting beside him with my hand on his shoulder, I invited the Lord Jesus to go back those twenty-eight years and walk through that day with this good man. “Please, Lord,” I asked, “draw out the hurt and the hate and the sorrow and set him free.” Almost as an afterthought I asked for peaceful sleep to be one of the evidences of this healing work, for he had not slept well for all those years. “Amen.” The next week he came up to me with a sparkle in his eyes and brightness on his face I had never seen before. “Every night I have slept soundly, and each morning I have awakened with a hymn on my mind. And I am happy... happy for the first time in twenty-eight years.” His wife concurred that it was so. That was many years ago, and the wonderful thing is that although this man has had the normal ups and downs of life since then, the old sorrows have never returned. He was totally and instantaneously healed.<sup>133</sup>

The history of God’s inspired people and practice reveal that there has always been a desire to move beyond spiritual practices for their own sakes and into the personal experience of Christ. Believers seeking more of God have traveled along a similar formational continuum of growth as described in this project: a progression from quieting, to listening, to restoring, and becoming. From Christ in the synagogue to the

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<sup>133</sup>Foster, 205.

early church, to St. Benedict, to Guigo II, to Ambrose, and many others, the goal has been the same: encounter Christ, hear his voice, and become transformed to his character and experience his peace.

### **Reason and Experience**

A measure of peace and formation of the character of Jesus Christ can be seen in the way the population expresses itself. In a recent study by the Barna Group, there was no significant difference in self-indulgent behaviors between Christians and non-Christians:

Faith commitments sometimes play a role in what people do—but less often than might be assumed. In comparing the lifestyle choices of born again Christians to the national norms, there were more areas of similarity than distinction. (Note that in Barna surveys, the born again segment is *not* based upon whether a person uses that label, but based upon their profession of faith in Christ and confession of personal sin.) Born again Christians are more likely to volunteer for their church; however, they are no more likely than average to help the poor and homeless. Born again Christians were also among the least likely groups to recycle.

In evaluating 15 moral behaviors, born again Christians are statistically indistinguishable from non-born again adults on most of the behaviors studied. They are less likely to view sexually explicit movies and magazines, to use profanity in public, and to buy a lottery ticket. However, even in these cases, the gap between born agains and the norm is not wide—roughly one-third of the non-born again audience say they had engaged in the three activities compared to one-quarter of born again Christians.<sup>134</sup>

Another Barna Group study shows that the divorce rate between Christians and non-Christians is identical:

Although many Christian churches attempt to dissuade congregants from getting a divorce, the research confirmed a finding identified by Barna a decade ago (and further confirmed through tracking studies conducted each year since): born again Christians have the same likelihood of divorce as do non-Christians.

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<sup>134</sup> Barna Group, “American Lifestyles Mix Compassion and Self-Oriented Behavior,” <http://www.barna.org/donorscause-articles/110-american-lifestyles-mix-compassion-and-self-oriented-behavior?q=self-indulgence> [accessed October 1, 2012].

Among married born again Christians, 35% have experienced a divorce. That figure is identical to the outcome among married adults who are not born again: 35%.<sup>135</sup>

These statistics demonstrate that Christians are no more likely to display the self-sacrificing and servant heart of Christ than those who do not claim the name of Christ. Christ himself said, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”<sup>136</sup> This character is found no more in those who attend church than those who do not. A deeper and more substantive transformation is needed. This is a formation beyond outward behavior to the very character of Christ.

The researcher has been engaged in the ministries of pastoral care and restorative prayer over twenty years. The models of ministry employed by the researcher have been developed to help individuals with life-controlling issues through the application of inner healing prayer and spiritual practices. Through that experience, the researcher has identified insights and challenges in walking beside those who would follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

Many of those who have come for the ministry of restoration have done so at a point of crisis or emotional pain. They have often sought short-term solutions to long term issues. Through a biblically inspired protocol, the researcher has been able to bring relief. However, it has been the anecdotal experience of the researcher that those seeking short term solutions without acquiring long term spiritual practice tend to fall back into their former emotional challenges and issues. Conversely, those who have seen the healing event as the beginning of a new season of spiritual journey and have taken up

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<sup>135</sup> Barna Group, “Born Again Christians Just as Likely to Divorce as Are Non-Christians,” <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/194-born-again-christians-just-as-likely-to-divorce-as-are-non-christians?q=christian+divorce+rate> [accessed October 2012].

<sup>136</sup> Mk 10:45 [NASB].

spiritual practices have seen longer-term healing and greater intimacy with Christ that leads to transformation and inner peace. Community is also an important consideration in the formational journey.

Those subjects who are searching for mere relief of emotional pain rather than new transformational levels of intimacy with Christ are rather like the wealthy young man who came to Jesus:

As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. "You know the commandments, 'DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.'" And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up." Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.<sup>137</sup>

The young man was not coming to Jesus to surrender his life, but rather to gain something from Jesus as if eternal life was one more possession to be carried. Jesus was saying to the young man that gaining eternal life was more than a matter of observing the law; it was about surrender and priority of following Christ. Jesus identified the purpose of eternal life in his priestly prayer. "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."<sup>138</sup> Jesus identified a lack in the young man's life; the things that the young man possessed actually possessed him. The eternal life the young man sought could only be found by taking up a new way of living. In a similar vein, Jesus advises those who would follow him of the cost of discipleship.

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<sup>137</sup> Mk 10:17-22 [NASB].

<sup>138</sup> Jn 17:3-4 [NASB].

“And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.’”<sup>139</sup>

It has been the observation of the researcher through the ministries of pastoral care and spiritual formation that those who follow Jesus Christ do so best when they practice what the researcher has identified as the formational continuum with practices of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming. These facets of the formational continuum have been seen throughout Scripture, the history of the church, and in the experience of the researcher in the ministry of formational counseling.

The researcher has developed and adapted tools that adhere to the formational continuum. One of those tools is the “Personal Ministry Guide” found in *Healing the Wounded Heart* authored by the researcher. The following is an example of a sample ministry session. This tool has been used by individuals reading *Healing the Wounded Heart* and also as a healing script by those who walk beside them in sessions of restorative prayer. There are a total of seven such sessions in the “Personal Ministry Guide” covering issues of fear, rejection, worthlessness, shame, insecurity, defilement, and hopelessness. Each one begins with a focusing prayer (quieting), then leads to uncovering wounds often in memories in which the reader/subject is acknowledging the personal presence of Christ in places of wounding (listening) with that representation communicating healing truth (restoring). Finally, the reader/subject is provided a Scriptural mediation by which to further reinforce the healing truth received during the session (becoming).

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<sup>139</sup>Mk 8:34-35 [NASB].

The reader/subject is then given another tool called *The Healing Journey*, also authored by the researcher, by which they continue the spiritual journey through the use of a model similar to *lectio divina* for several weeks (see Appendix A). An example of one of those daily journal entries follows the “Personal Ministry Guide” example.

The reader/subject is given space and opportunity to enter into this daily spiritual practice in the morning and asked to keep the mental images in mind throughout the day. They are also encouraged to keep a daily and weekly record of what the Lord is speaking to them during the journey. Space is provided in *The Healing Journey* itself to record a one-line summary of what they are experiencing. It is recommended that they share their experiences and insights with their healing community along the way.

The formational continuum also supplies a narrative for ministry sessions. The subject is brought to the place of quiet focus through practices such as the breath prayer or the Jesus prayer, whichever has been most natural for the subject. The subject is brought to connection with the voice of the shepherd by a variety of models, whether the restorative prayer model shown earlier or *lectio divina*. Sometimes it is a simple listening prayer from what was deemed a “safe place,” which is taken from a safe personal memory in the mind of the subject or sometime inspired by images from Scripture that is meaningful to the subject. At the conclusion of each restoration session the subject is brought back to the place of quiet contemplation to savor the experience with Christ.

The formational continuum is also encouraged as a way of life in balance with times of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming. In the formational continuum believers are brought by the shepherd to quiet places to be refreshed in his presence.

Believers are restored and set upon new paths for his name's sake. They are called out of darkness, unbound, released to a deeper transformed walk with Christ.

### **Summary**

In Chapter One of this project, the researcher observed the need of an integrated model of spiritual formation that would go beyond behavioral adjustment to the deeper transformation of the follower of Christ. The researcher identified an integrated model of spiritual formation referred to in this project as the formational continuum with dimensions of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming. Through this formational continuum, followers of Christ employ spiritual practices that involve the whole person including the linear and intuitive aspects of the brain.

In Chapter Two of this project, the researcher has established a biblical and theological foundation for the formational continuum citing several passages from the Scriptures that follow the continuum in the lives and experience of biblical characters. The formational continuum was also observed through various practices that have developed throughout the history of the church as well as the practical ministry observations of the researcher.

In Chapter Three, the researcher will provide a literature review of the approaches through which others discipline who have sought to move others toward the peace and character of Jesus Christ. This general review will include models of formational or inner healing prayer as well as Christian counseling, psychology, and also include observations from neuroscience.

Chapter Four will set forth the research model that the researcher will use to determine the effect of an integrated model of spiritual formation along the lines of the formational continuum and Chapter Five will provide an interpretation from the data gathered in the research phase of this project.

CHAPTER THREE  
LITERATURE REVIEW

**Introduction: What Do We Seek?**

The first chapter of the Gospel of John records a conversation between Jesus Christ and two followers. It is a conversation that pertains to all those who seek the peace and character of Christ:

Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and \*said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, “What do you seek?” They said to Him, “Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?” He said to them, “Come, and you will see.” So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.<sup>140</sup>

In this critical conversation, Jesus provides a directional question, “What do you seek?” What is sought in the innermost regions is rest and peace. As the two followers of Christ discovered, that peace and rest are found when believers move in with him. This moving in with Christ is not an event; it is a lifestyle of transformation through a continuous pursuit. The psalmist instructs, “seek peace and to pursue it.”<sup>141</sup> This ongoing pursuit of peace or shalom is referred to in this project as spiritual formation. Spiritual formation has been defined in this project as the pursuit of the peace and character of Christ through spiritual practice. The integrated model detailed in this project follows a

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<sup>140</sup> Jn 1:35-40 [NASB].

<sup>141</sup> Ps 34:14 [NASB].

formational continuum of four dimensions moving from quieting, to listening, to restoring, and to becoming. These dimensions are experienced through related spiritual practices.

A key word used in previous chapters is integration, as this project aims at an integrated approach to spiritual formation around continuum with dimensions of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming. The English word “integrate, stems from a Latin word *integrare*, meaning to make whole.<sup>142</sup> This agrees with the definition cited of the Hebrew word *shalom*. For the follower of Christ wholeness, shalom or integration is not just arriving at a better version of humanity, but growth in the character and peace of Christ.

The spiritual practices suggested in the formational continuum do not, in and of themselves, bring peace; they bring a more focused awareness of Christ that in turn brings peace. Spiritual practices are sculptor’s tools in the hands of the Holy Spirit that remove everything that does not resemble Christ. That work of formation happens as believers move into Christ. Peace is more than the absence of conflict or stress. Speaking of mankind, Augustine said, “You arouse him to take joy in praising you, for you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”<sup>143</sup>

Commenting on the believers movement into Christ, David Benner writes, “People who are on a spiritual journey are people whose passions point them forward and

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<sup>142</sup> 1630s, "to render (something) whole," from L. *integratus*, pp. of *integrare* "make whole," from *integer* "whole." Meaning "to put together parts or elements and combine them into a whole" is from 1802. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/integrate?s=ts>, Online Etymology Dictionary. Douglas Harper, Historian [accessed May 3, 2013].

<sup>143</sup> Saint Augustine, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, Translated, with an Introduction and notes, by John K. Ryan (New York: Doubleday, 1960), 43.

beyond themselves.”<sup>144</sup> As previously stated in this chapter, the quest for peace does not end with a better version of a human being but in the formation of the character of Jesus Christ. As Christ is pursued, believers become quieter and closer to him. Richard Foster writes, “For too long we have been in a far country: a country of noise and hurry and crowds, a country of climb and push and shove, a country of frustration and fear and intimidation. And he welcomes us home: home to serenity and peace and joy, home to friendship and fellowship and openness, home to intimacy and acceptance and affirmation.”<sup>145</sup>

The peace of Christ cannot be separated from the character of Christ. Peace is not found outside transformation into the character of Christ. Peace, for the follower of Christ, is a fruit of the Spirit brought about by a devoted and increasing focus on Christ through the agency of spiritual practice. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”<sup>146</sup>

As stated in Chapter One of this project, “The call is for integration in approaching God. This integration from a neuro-physiological perspective also represents God’s heart for man to live in peace or shalom with all parts of us connected and working

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<sup>144</sup> David Benner, *Soulful Spirituality: Becoming Fully Alive and Deeply Human* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 15.

<sup>145</sup> Richard J. Foster, *Prayer - 10th Anniversary Edition: Finding the Heart's True Home* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 1.

<sup>146</sup> Gal 5:22–24 [NASB].

together.”<sup>147</sup> The integrated model suggested in this project involves both the right and left hemispheres of the brain. The follower of Christ employs the formational continuum that includes practices of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming described in the previous chapter.

Chapter Two of this project established the foundation for the historical and theological evidence for an integrated model of spiritual formation. In the current chapter, the researcher will look at the pursuit of the peace and character of Christ through other models predominantly used in the church. This discussion will include healing prayer models as well as traditional approaches to spiritual formation, Christian counseling models, and also a brief discussion from related fields. The models will be categorized as to their place in the continuum.

This chapter will discuss complementary approaches to pursue the peace and character of Christ that reflect one or more dimensions of the formational continuum identified by the researcher in this project. These complimentary approaches will be briefly classified at the conclusion of this chapter as to how they fit into the formational continuum.

### **Christian Approaches to Spiritual Formation and Healing**

The models described hereafter represent the pursuit of the peace and character of Christ in the lives of believers. Each model touches one or more aspects of the formational continuum described in this project. These are models include approaches to

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<sup>147</sup> šālōm, "Peace," in this case, means much more than mere absence of war. Rather, the root meaning of the verb šālēm better expresses the true concept of šālōm, Completeness, wholeness, harmony, fulfillment, are closer to the meaning. Implicit in šālōm is the idea of unimpaired relationships with others and fulfillment in one's undertakings. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 930.

inner-healing, Christian counseling, and classical spiritual practices such as prayer and meditation. The models referenced do not constitute an exhaustive listing of their types, but are chosen because of their wide use and the presentation of a clear model of ministry. (There are many writers adding to the knowledge and insight regarding spiritual practice but may not present a specific organizational model by which to observe spiritual practices.) These models also represent the goal of renewing the mind through a form of interactive practice and prayer. Each model represents movement toward Christ. The models identified in this chapter are nondirective in nature in that the care-receiver is taking responsibility to pursue formation rather than the instruction and insights of the caregiver or minister.

### Inner Healing Prayer Models

The approaches described in this category each involve the interactive participation of the believer and the Holy Spirit in the process of uncovering and healing areas of emotional upheaval and limitation. The inner-healing models identified in this chapter range from the directive to the nondirective in nature. Some models rely heavily on the discernment and input from a facilitator in the prayer session, while others involve the care-receiver taking responsibility to pursue formation rather than the instruction and insights of the caregiver or minister. Some of these approaches to inner-healing prayer include other spiritual practices, while others are solely focused on the interactive prayer session for healing.

### *Theophostic Prayer Ministry*

Theophostic Prayer Ministry (TPM), developed by Ed Smith in the 1990s, is an inner-healing prayer model whose goal is the peace and transformation of those receiving ministry. The TPM approach is a less directive model wherein the facilitator seeks to clear the way for the prayer recipient to experience the presence of Christ for himself or herself without the aid of guided visualization or other input from the TPM prayer minister. The TPM session often begins with the administration of an emotional inventory to determine the nature and extent of damaged emotions. An interactive prayer session moves the prayer-receiver toward the source of their emotional pain and the lies from which they are derived. Smith describes TPM as intercessory prayer:

In its simplest description Theophostic Prayer Ministry is prayer. In the context of prayer the ministry moves aside and allows the Spirit of Christ to expose darkness with light. It is the spirit of Christ revealing truth, freeing an individual of the lies that dominate his or her thinking, emotions and behavior. Jesus can set people free from lifelong fears, shame, false guilt, and anxiety, lifting the dark clouds of all emotional pain in a divinely directed moment. This is basically Romans 12:2, “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”<sup>148</sup>

Elsewhere Smith states that TPM involves an “authentic encounter with the presence of Christ, resulting in mind renewal and subsequent transformed life.”<sup>149</sup> TPM views transformation as the result of the encounter within the prayer session with no other apparent practices outlined. For the Theophostic Prayer Minister, the goal is to allow the one receiving ministry to experience a transforming and personal experience of the presence of Christ in the recalling of times of past wounding. Smith emphasizes the encounter as the way of transformation over traditional biblical or therapeutic counseling.

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<sup>148</sup> Edward M. Smith, *Healing Life's Hurts Through Theophostic Prayer* (Campbellsville, KY: New Creation Publishing, 2005), 11.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

In Theophostic Principle Ten Smith states, “No person, including ourselves, is capable of talking us out of the lies we believe. We will be free only when we receive the truth from the One who is Truth.”<sup>150</sup>

Smith describes renewal of the mind through TPM as:

...[B]oth cognitive and experiential. Mind renewal goes beyond gathering of biblical facts and knowledge to the place where the believer is able to experientially able to walk in the present reality of righteousness that he or she knows logically and has by faith had hold of in Christ. Lie-based thinking robs us of knowing this reality. Though it is true, “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature” (2 Cor 5:17) this truth does not always match our experiential reality. The reason that I do not always emotionally and experientially know this reality is often due in part to the lies I believe. Yet as each lie is replaced by truth, I come to know who and what I am in Christ, and this reality can become an effortless outflow of the truth I experientially possess.<sup>151</sup>

There is some data on the effectiveness of TPM cited in a study by Kimberly A. Tilley. Tilley surveyed the effectiveness of TPM in a sample group made up of individuals who had experienced previous types of counseling models and then compared the results to TPM. It was found that TPM clients are more able to forgive people who have hurt them in the past after receiving TPM compared to previous counseling experiences. They experienced improved relationships with other people compared to counseling sessions prior to TPM. They experienced improvement with the issues they struggled with compared to counseling sessions prior to TPM. They experienced a deepening in their relationship with God.<sup>152</sup> There was no data presented as to the long-term effectiveness or transformation of character as a result of TPM in this study.

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<sup>150</sup> Smith, 48.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>152</sup> Kimberly A. Tilley, “Current Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Theophostic Prayer Ministry” (doctoral dissertation, Southern California Seminary, 2008), 124-125.

Smith describes mind renewal as a “lifelong process.”<sup>153</sup> However, the details or specifics of a model employing additional spiritual practices or interventions outside the TPM sessions are not detailed in an integrated model. TPM falls under the “restoring” dimension of the formational continuum as it addresses past pain through interactive and non-directive ministry sessions. The “becoming” dimension of the formational continuum is assumed in the Theophostic Prayer Model as the prayer recipient discovers the personal truth and the underlying source of their emotional pain in steps toward a renewed mind. There are no other specific guidelines or models that integrate other forms of spiritual practice to continue in the process of renewing the mind. While the Theophostic Prayer model has been used effectively to heal wounds from the past it does not represent an integrated model for spiritual formation.

#### *Formational Prayer Model of Terry Wardle*

Terry Wardle of Ashland Seminary has developed the concept of formational prayer. This is the combination of inner healing prayer that also considers the personal spiritual formational of both facilitators and care-receivers. Wardle states:

Inner healing prayer is a work of the Holy Spirit moving through caregivers to the broken and battered. The Holy Spirit uses them to identify root wounds and to set people free from dysfunctional behaviors. He also exposes lies that bring emotional turmoil and release the broken from demonic bondage. The Holy Spirit inspires caregivers to use Scripture, confession, visualization, repentance and healing prayer to minister grace and hope where darkness once reigned. All of this “inner healing” is possible because Jesus Christ has won the victory over all forms of brokenness and is available to all who turn to Him. Caregivers are not separated from the process. They are always integrated participants in the healing encounter with Christ.<sup>154</sup>

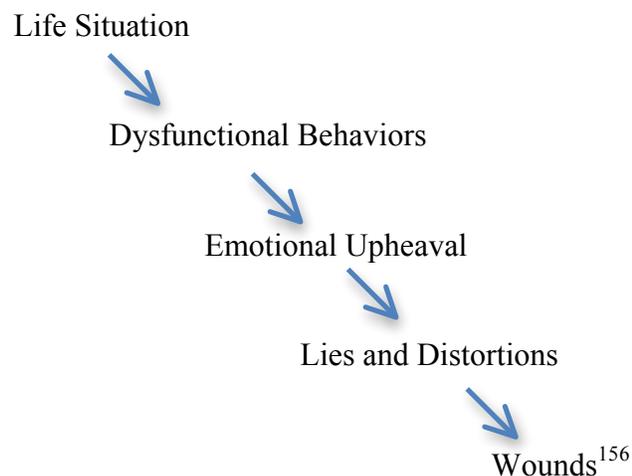
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<sup>153</sup> Smith, 54.

<sup>154</sup> Terry Wardle, *Healing Care, Healing Prayer: Helping the Broken Find Wholeness in Christ* (Orange, CA: New Leaf Books, 2001), 19.

Wardle has identified “structures of inner healing” that descend in order from the life situation, that is the context where the person experiences his or her pain and difficulty, to dysfunctional behaviors which are often employed by the wounded as a “way of coping with great pain.”<sup>155</sup> These could be behaviors such as avoidance or addictions. Emotional upheaval in those deep feelings such as fear and shame are brought to the surface as originating in the wounding event. Lies and distortions arise from that original event and are believed by the wounded as objective truth. All of these descend downward and are traceable to an original wound.

Figure 3.1 Descending order of the structures of healing

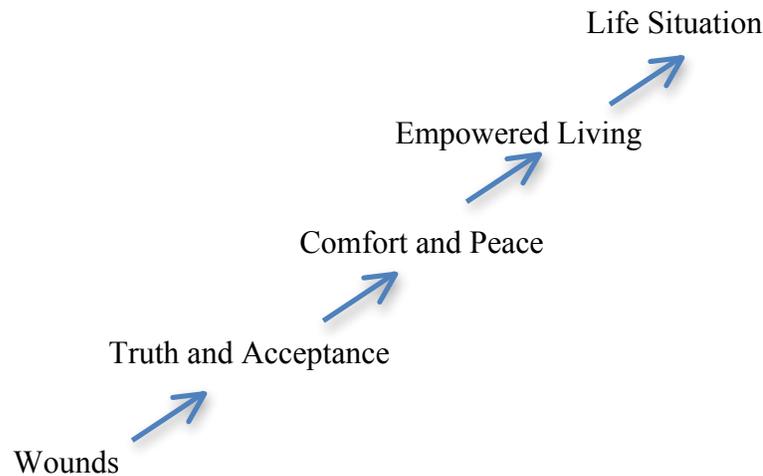


Within the formational prayer session, the caregiver is positioning the care-receiver for an encounter with Christ for the purpose of healing and transformation. As a result of positioning the wounded for the encounter with Christ, the care-receiver experiences an upward progression.

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<sup>155</sup>Wardle, 140. This figure was based upon Wardle’s structures of healing in *Healing Care, Healing Prayer*.

Figure 3.2 Ascending order of the structures of healing



Wardle has delineated six steps for the process of formational prayer. They are not strict demands or a precise sequence but more as road signs along the road to inner wholeness:

- Step 1: Bring the Broken Person Before their Heavenly Father
- Step 2: Ask the Holy Spirit to Identify the Wound to be Touched
- Step 3: Help the Broken Person Grieve His Loss Before the Lord
- Step 4: Position the Person to Experience Infilling and Truth
- Step 5: Encourage the Person to Extend Forgiveness
- Step 6: Enable the Person to Embrace the Victory of the Cross<sup>157</sup>

Formational prayer also places an emphasis on the healing community that views the caregiver as fellow traveler more than a counselor. While the caregiver has a role to play, they are not directing the formational prayer session or suggesting visual images to the care-receiver. The formational prayer approach is non-directive and relies on the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit. The role of the facilitator is to position the care-receiver to receive healing.

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<sup>157</sup> Wardle, 198. This figure was based upon Wardle's structures of healing in *Healing Care, Healing Prayer*.

The formational prayer session begins with an acknowledgment of the presence of Jesus Christ and a prayer that the Holy Spirit would sanctify the imagination.<sup>158</sup> A safe place is sought from which the care-receiver is able to view areas of past wounding in the comfort of the presence of Christ. The care-receiver is asked to envision a place in which they can be comfortable and peaceful. That safe place is then associated with the presence of Christ. A helpful distinctive of Wardle's formational prayer approach is the lament where the care-receiver reflects upon and verbalizes their pain and disappointment to God.

Wardle shares the values of focus and spiritual practice, though there is not a specific model or order for such practice mentioned in his model. This formational prayer approach emphasizes the spiritual formation of the caregiver as well as the care-receiver with the key ingredient being intimacy with God. Wardle states, "Many Christians have been educated and trained with in a modern paradigm of education that prioritizes reason above relationship. The central premise of this approach is that "if you think correctly you will then think and behave correctly." And thinking correctly demands that people have a firm grasp on all the necessary information."<sup>159</sup> Wardle's statement agrees with the view of this project that spiritual formation or discipleship has become more behavioral than relational. Wardle states, "Cognitive and behavioral insights into people's problems can and do help. Medication and psychiatric care do stabilize those who are

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<sup>158</sup> Terry Wardle, *The Ministry of Formational Prayer Manual* (Terry Wardle, 2002), 6-84.

<sup>159</sup> Wardle, *Healing Care, Healing Prayer*, 27.

unable to function in life. But healing and well-being ultimately result from a connection with God, the Father of love.”<sup>160</sup>

Wardle contrasts an informational approach to a transformational approach in several succinct statements:

Beyond Learning To Knowing  
 Beyond Knowledge To Change  
 Beyond Principles To Presence  
 Beyond Periods of Time to Moments in Time  
 Beyond Reading Scripture to Experiencing Scripture  
 Beyond Prayer to Communion  
 Beyond Working To Waiting<sup>161</sup>

The formational prayer model identified by Terry Wardle is one of journey, intimate community, and transformation that encompass both the one on the healing journey and those who walk with them.

### *Other Healing Voices*

Many have contributed to the development and teaching of healing prayer. Among them are John and Paula Sanford, founders of Elijah House, a ministry of healing and transformation founded in 1975. The Sanfords have authored several books and training materials including *The Transformation of the Inner Man*,<sup>162</sup> which articulates their theology of inner healing.

David Seamands, a professor at Asbury Theological Seminary and leader in spiritual renewal in the United Methodist denomination, has authored several books in the area of healing wounded hearts.

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<sup>160</sup> Wardle, *Healing Prayer, Healing Care*, 21.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>162</sup> John Loren Sandford and Paula Sanford, *The Transformation of the Inner Man* (Tulsa: Victory House, 1982).

Neil Anderson, founder of Freedom in Christ Ministries, has published several books and materials to promote personal freedom in Christ. Though Anderson does not include a memory healing aspect in his ministry, he has developed *Seven Steps to Freedom* that is also included in many of his published works. These seven steps touch on past healing issues through a prayer/confessional approach where the reader or care-receiver makes declarations based on the Scriptures. Anderson has authored several books in the area of personal freedom and discipleship.

### **Christian Counseling**

Christian counseling represents a synthesis of clinical psychology and the use of Scripture. Christian counseling is a behavioral approach seeking to bring peace to care receivers through identifying unbiblical thought patterns and beliefs. Christian counseling shares the desired goal of peace and character in the lives of believers.

Lawrence Crabb, a foundational author in the development of Christian counseling describes the practice and goals of Christian counseling:

We must develop a solidly biblical approach to counseling, one which draws from secular psychology without betraying its Scriptural premise, one which faces the deep (and not so deep) problems of people and honestly evaluates its success in dealing with them, and, most importantly, one which clings passionately and unswervingly to belief in an inerrant Bible and an all-sufficient Christ.<sup>163</sup>

There are a variety of approaches to Christian counseling that range from the purely psychotherapeutic to bibliocentric. Anderson, Zuelke, and Zuelke have suggested a framework from which to describe diverse strategies for Christian counseling approaches:

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<sup>163</sup> Lawrence Crabb, *Basic Principles of Biblical Counseling: Meeting Counseling Needs through the Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), 19.

1. *Bible-Only Counselors*. These Christian counselors see the integration of psychological principles as unwise at best, and these principles are not used when religious concerns are addressed in the therapy hour.

2. *Closed Counselors*. This therapist is a Christian in personal life but believes that open expression of and attention to spiritual issues should not occur in a psychotherapy session.

3. *Closet Counselors*. Counselors who adopt this approach may have integrated their expressions of faith with psychological principles but for various reasons do not openly demonstrate this fact in the therapy session.

4. *Conjoint Counselors*. Therapists in this category are most likely to accomplish the multidimensional goals for counseling in a Christian setting; they utilize explicit expression of the spiritual aspects of life in a treatment plan, along with psychological assessment and treatment techniques. These therapists take a balanced approach to counseling.<sup>164</sup>

### Nouthetic Counseling

Nouthetic counseling, developed by Jay Adams, is an approach to counseling in which the counselor confronts the care-receiver with the truth of the Scriptures. There is very little emphasis on psychotherapeutic principles. The words *nouthesis* and *noutheteo* are the noun and verb forms in the New Testament from which the term “nouthetic” comes.<sup>165</sup> Adams cites Paul’s use of the word: “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”<sup>166</sup>

Adams describes three elements of nouthetic counseling: “The three ideas found in the word *nouthesia* are **confrontation**, **concern**, and **change**. To put it simply,

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<sup>164</sup> Neil Anderson, Terry E. Zuelke, and Julianne Zuelke, *Christ Centered Therapy: The Practical Integration of Theology and Psychology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 70-71.

<sup>165</sup> Jay Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970), 41.

<sup>166</sup> Col 3:16 [NASB].

“nouthetic counseling consists of lovingly confronting people out of deep concern in order to help them make those changes that God requires.”<sup>167</sup>

The typical nouthetic session is directed by the nouthetic counselor and is oriented toward problem solving. The client in nouthetic counseling is asked to keep a notebook of the issues or problems in the client’s life or behavior that are being addressed. “At each nouthetic counseling session the counselor assigns specific problems from the agenda (or elsewhere) as homework. He writes concrete suggestions in the client’s homework book whenever possible . . . entitled *Progress in Problem Solving*.” The client records progress with assigned issues on a page titled “Problem-Solution Sheet.”<sup>168</sup>

The sheet has four categories arranged as follows:

Table 3.1. Nouthetic Problem Solving Sheet

<b>What Happened</b>	<b>What I Did</b>	<b>What I should Have Done</b>	<b>What I Now Must Do</b>
Problem (describe)	My Response (describe)	Biblical Response Describe the steps (cite and explain references)	Steps that must be taken to rectify matters

Though nouthetic counseling is directive, Adams states that one of his objectives in nouthetic counseling is to help the client to find self-discipline or Christian maturity.<sup>169</sup>

Nouthetic counseling is focused on behavior more than healing the source of the emotional pain that may lead to dysfunctional behavior. There is little or no emphasis on inner healing or mention of other recommended spiritual practices.

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<sup>167</sup> Jay Adams, Institute for Nouthetic Studies, <http://www.nouthetic.org/about-ins/what-is-nouthetic-counseling> [accessed March 28, 2013].

<sup>168</sup> Adams, *Competent to Counsel*, 197. Table 3.1 was based upon a single row in the Nouthetic Problem Solving Sheet found in Adam’s text.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

## Christian Counseling

Gary Collins suggests that those practicing Christian counseling are addressing practical and spiritual needs. Here is this researcher's condensed summary of the needs fulfilled by Christian counselors according to Collins:

*Self-Understanding.* Christian counseling gives the counselee a true picture of what is going in themselves of themselves and within the world that surrounds them.

*Communication.* Christian counseling helps the counselee to communicate feeling, thoughts and attitudes both accurately and effectively.

*Learning and Behavior Change.* Christian counseling helps counsees unlearn ineffective behavior and learn more effective ways of doing things.

*Self-Actualization.* Christian counseling helps the individual learn to achieve and maintain their optimal potential.

*Support.* Christian counseling provides support and encouragement to counsees through times of stress and crisis.

*Spiritual Wholeness.* The Christian counselor becomes a spiritual leader who guides spiritual growth, helps counsees deal with spiritual struggles, and enable them to find meaningful beliefs and values through a "dialogue" that acknowledges the presence of God as the heart of effective people helping.<sup>170</sup>

### *Lawrence Crabb*

Another voice in Christian counseling, Lawrence Crabb, describes Christian counseling in terms of "moving over" and "moving up." Crabb writes:

The goal of Christian counseling is to promote Christian maturity, to help people enter into a richer experience of worship and a more effective life of service. In broad terms, Christian maturity is developed by (1) dealing with any immediate problem circumstances in a manner consistent with Scripture: MOVE OVER (2) developing an inward character which conforms to the character (attitudes, beliefs, purposes) of Christ: MOVE UP."<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Gary Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, rev. ed. (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1988), 39-40.

<sup>171</sup> Lawrence Crabb, *Effective Biblical Counseling: A Model for Helping Caring Christians Become Capable Counselors* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 29.

In summary, Christian counseling represents a combination of psychology and Scripture applied in very diverse approaches. Particular models can be more or less directed by a Christian counselor or therapist. Christian counseling pertains mostly to the listening dimensions of the formational continuum, and it addresses a mostly linear/rational approach as opposed to the intuitive. In general, Christian counseling seeks to adjust behavior of the care-receiver to bring it into conformity with biblical guidelines. The practice of Christian counseling ranges from the professional counselor to the preparation lay-counselors in the local church.

### **Classic Voices in Spiritual Formation**

#### The Desert Fathers and Mothers

From the earliest days of the church, followers of Christ have sought the peace and character of Christ through spiritual practice. The themes of spiritual journey, union with Christ, and transformation have been found throughout church history in the monastic and mystical expressions.

Early on in the history of the church, followers of Christ have sought to be separated *from* the corruption of the world and *to* Christ. The earliest of these followers referred to as ascetics or hermits formed communities in the eastern wilderness and were known as the desert fathers and mothers. They sought to live in the silence and simplicity of the desert away from the influence of the world. The beginning of this monastic movement is traceable to a man called Antony from a small town in Egypt. Commenting on the desert fathers and mothers John Chryssavgis writes:

Christian monasticism began on a Sunday morning the year 270 or 271 in a small Egyptian village. The Gospel passage read in worship that day included the words:

If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. (Matt. 19.21)

In the congregation, there sat a young man called Antony who, on hearing these words, sought a life not merely of relative poverty but of radical solitude.<sup>172</sup>

The Christian Church had been under assault from the Roman Empire until the early fourth century when Christianity became the official religion of Rome. Antony's flight into the wilderness was not out of fear for his physical life but for his spiritual peace.

Many of the writings of this monastic movement have been collected in *The Saying of the Desert Fathers* published in many editions and variations. The leaders of authors of these sayings were known as *abbas* and *ammās*, fathers and mothers. Some of these desert fathers are Paul of Thebes, Anthony the Great, Abba Arsenius, Abba Poemen, Abba Athanasius of Alexandria, and John Cassian who would bring eastern monasticism into the western church.

The desert fathers and mothers began the practice of meditative or hesychastic<sup>173</sup> prayer unique to the eastern monastic life of solitude. The real work of the monastic community was prayer and the emphasis was on inner transformation. The main effort and goal was inner transformation in the presence of Christ. Writing on John Climacus, one of the desert fathers, Harvey D. Egan describes hesychastic prayer:

As the texts indicate, *hesychasm* results in a prayer that “holds the world together,” as well as direct experience of God, raptures in the Lord, humility, serenity (*apatheia*), and stillness of soul (*hesychia*). The fire of the Holy Spirit

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<sup>172</sup> John Chryssavgis, *In the Heart of the Desert: The Spirituality of the Desert Fathers and Mothers* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2008), 15.

<sup>173</sup> *Hesychastic* from *hesychia*, translated as quiet or silent, See 2 Th 3:12.

awakens in the heart. One is transported and transformed into Christ's light, the divine light that surrounded Jesus on Mt. Tabor.<sup>174</sup>

### Saint Benedict of Nursia

The western monastic movement began under St. Benedict of Nursia (c.480-547) who is considered the founder of western monasticism. His chief writing, *The Rule of Benedict*, contains guidelines for living in monastic community that included the systematic devotion to the reading of Scripture and lectio divina as mentioned in the previous chapter of this project.

The career of St. Benedict begins in the solitude of the wilderness. "He began his Christian vocation in a cave as a hermit in 500, where he retreated to escape the temptations and clamor of Rome. Soon other \*anchorites moved near him, and a loose monastic community developed."<sup>175</sup> As mentioned in Chapter Two of this project, Benedict placed a major emphasis of lectio divina in community. Timothy Fry describes *The Rule* and its connection with contemplative reading:

The emphasis in *The Rule* on contemplative practices gives it its exceptional value and, of course, over the centuries has inspired many reformers, organizations, and individuals to create fresh ways of being contemplative. The Rule refers to the chanting psalms as the *Opus Dei*, or work of God, and for the monk it is certainly the central work that common prayer, carried out in a spirit of contemplation and with beauty, is his or her central work.<sup>176</sup>

*The Rule of St. Benedict* continues to be an influence to this day in the lives of monastics and individuals looking for structure and rhythm in their spiritual lives.

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<sup>174</sup> Harvey D. Egan, *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 116.

<sup>175</sup> Nathan P. Feldmeth. *Pocket Dictionary of Church History* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), Kindle Edition, locations 235-236.

<sup>176</sup> Timothy Fry, ed., *The Rule of St. Benedict*, in English (New York: Random House, 1998), xxiii.

## Augustine of Hippo

Another work of interior formation is *The City of God* by Augustine of Hippo. As the Roman Empire was thrashing through its final days the outer world was in decay. Augustine sought to describe the interior world as the dwelling place of *City of God*.

In *The City of God*, Augustine contrast two cities; those after the flesh and those after the Spirit:

.... [T]here are no more than two kinds of human society, which we may justly call two cities, according to the language of our Scriptures. The one consists of those who wish to live after the flesh, the other of those who wish to live after the Spirit; and when they severally achieve what they wish, they live in peace, each after their kind.<sup>177</sup>

Here is the mention of the peace through Augustine. One is a circumstantial peace after the flesh and the true peace of Christ for those pursuing life in the spirit. One is the inward city and the other the outward city. This contrast of inner and outer peace would become part of the teaching on the formation of believers in many subsequent forms.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century was the classic era of Christian mysticism seeking greater intimacy of union with Christ. Some of the key figures in Christian mysticism were Tomas A Kempis, St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and Ignatius of Loyola. Each or these individuals represented a progressive movement toward the peace and character of Christ. Simon Park describes this age of Christian mysticism:

At the heart of this Christian mysticism was the desire for union with Christ, and though each writer and movement varied in approach, certain features were shared: a focus on Jesus rather than the Church; use of the local language rather than Latin; emphasis on the New Testament rather than the Old Testament; focus on the holiness of lay people as well as clerics; an emphasis on the humanity of

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<sup>177</sup> Saint Augustine, *City of God* (Public Domain, 2010), Kindle Edition, Locations 8844-8846.

Jesus rather than the cosmic Christ; and finally, a commitment to preaching and instruction.<sup>178</sup>

### Thomas á Kempis

Thomas á Kempis, a priest of a devotional order born in the fourteenth century composed a work that is still widely read today. *The Imitation of Christ* that has been offered in more than 2,000 editions in several languages. Simon Parke who has edited a recent version of the book describes the writing of Thomas as follows:

Thomas writes as a monk for monks, but clearly his passion and insights spill well beyond the cloistered world of the monastery. One writer called it “The diary of a soul on its way to perfection,” which captures well the author’s spiritual ambition both for himself and others. As he himself says in the second book, “Disdain that which is superficial, dedicate yourself to your inner being, and you shall see that the kingdom of God grows inside you.”<sup>179</sup>

The presentation of *The Imitation of Christ* does not flow in an inductive structure but rather meanders through four books that consistently reflect the theme of devotion of the person of Christ and inner transformation. “For Thomas, Scripture was to be read through the eyes of simplicity not learning. Scripture was a vehicle for truth which would be discovered by readers themselves.”<sup>180</sup>

### Teresa of Avila

Teresa of Avila, a mother superior of the Catholic Church and Christian mystic of the sixteenth century described movement toward the heart and character of Christ in her work, *The Interior Castle*. It is a work describing the mystical union between Christ and

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<sup>178</sup> Simon Parke and Thomas A. Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (Guildford, U.K.: White Crow Books, Kindle Edition, 2011), Locations 32-36.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., Kindle Locations 91-94.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., Locations 119-120.

the bride. In this work, St. Teresa described the nature of God's habitation in the human heart as a crystal castle with seven mansions. S. Teresa writes, "I began to think of the soul as if it were a castle made of a single diamond or of very clear crystal, in which there are many rooms, just as in heaven there are many mansions."<sup>181</sup>

The seven mansions each with many rooms represent the believer's progress toward union with Christ. The outer rooms are far from Christ with the light of his presence growing brighter as the pilgrim moves closer to the center mansion in their awareness of Christ. The following is a summary of each of these mansions:

**FIRST MANSIONS.** The first mansions are in a state of grace, but are still very much in love with the venomous creatures outside the castle—that is, with occasions of sin—and need a long and searching discipline before they can make any progress. These are the Mansions of Humility.

**SECOND MANSIONS.** These are the mansions of the Practice of Prayer. It is not yet secure from the attacks of the poisonous reptiles that infest the courtyard of the castles, but its powers of resistance are increasing.

**THIRD MANSIONS.** These are the mansions of Exemplary Life. These are mansions controlled by discipline and penance and disposed to performing acts of charity toward others.... It has not yet experienced the full inspiring force of love. Its love is governed by reason.

**FOURTH MANSIONS.** Here the supernatural element of the mystical life first enters.... the soul's part will become increasingly less and God's part increasingly greater. The soul is like a fountain built near its source and the water of life flows into it, not through an aqueduct, but directly from the spring.

**FIFTH MANSIONS.** This is the Prayer of Union. It marks a new degree of infused contemplation and a very high one.... The faculties of the soul are "asleep" . . . where the soul is completely possessed by God.

**SIXTH MANSIONS.** These are the mansions of Lover and Beloved [who] see each other for long periods at a time, and as they grow in intimacy they would receive increasing favours, together with increasing afflictions.

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<sup>181</sup> St. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, trans. E. Allison Peers (Radford, VA: Wilder Publications, 2010), 4.

SEVENTH MANISONS. Here at last the soul reaches Spiritual Marriage. Here dwells the King—“It may be called another Heaven”: the two lighted candles join and become one.... There is complete transformation, ineffable and perfect peace.<sup>182</sup>

### St. John of the Cross

*The Dark Night of the Soul*, by St. John of the Cross, a contemporary of St. Teresa of Avila, is a classic work in the area of Christian mysticism and journey toward union with Christ. The work itself consists of a poem composed by St. John of the Cross while he was imprisoned by his Carmelite brethren and also his commentary on that poem. The *Dark Night of the Soul* recounts the soul’s journey toward union with God. It is described here:

This night, which, as we say, is contemplation, produces in spiritual persons two kinds of darkness or purgation, corresponding to the two parts of man’s nature—namely, the sensual and the spiritual. And thus the one night or purgation will be sensual, wherein the soul is purged according to sense, which is subdued to the spirit; and the other is a night or purgation which is spiritual, wherein the soul is purged and stripped according to the spirit, and subdued and made ready for the union of love with God.<sup>183</sup>

As with other examples cited in this project the distinction is drawn between the eternal and the internal aspects of the human nature. The soul’s purgation refers to the pilgrim’s desire and awareness of the external senses and desires. The spirit refers to that eternal part of mankind that can enter into union with God.

There are ten steps toward union with God described in *Dark Night of the Soul*:

1. The soul becomes sick for the glory of God.
2. The soul searches for God unceasingly.
3. The soul is moved to do works for God.

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<sup>182</sup> Condensed from the summary of the translator of *Interior Castle*, St. Teresa, 4-6.

<sup>183</sup> St. John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul* (Radford, VA: Wilder Publications, Kindle Edition, 2008), Locations 517-521.

4. The soul suffers, the flesh is conquered, and God gives joy.
5. The soul has an impatient desire and longing for God.
6. The soul runs swiftly toward God and senses his touch.
7. The soul acquires an ardent boldness.
8. The soul lays hold of God as the beloved.
9. The soul burns gently with love.
10. The soul is assimilated to God, apparently after death.<sup>184</sup>

Both St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross employ the theme of the mystical and transformative union between Christ and the spiritual pilgrim. This calls to mind the progression of statements of the maiden in *Song of Songs* in her journey with the king:

“My beloved is mine, and I am his.”  
 “I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine.”  
 “I am my beloved’s, And his desire is for me.”<sup>185</sup>

As the spiritual practitioner grows closer to Christ there is a laying down of soulish desire and growing satisfaction in simply belonging to Christ.

#### Ignatius of Loyola

Ignatius of Loyola, who is mentioned in the previous chapter of this project, was the founder of The Society of Jesus and a spiritual director who led spiritual pilgrims through his *Exercises*. The central activity of the *Exercises* consisted of reading through passages of the gospels highlighting the nativity, the ministry, the passion, and the resurrection and ascension of Christ. In these readings the pilgrim engaged the gospel through visualization. The *Exercises* included regular examination of the heart and the identifying and repentance from sin. The *Exercises* are taken in a retreat of four weeks.

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<sup>184</sup> John of the Cross, Summary of His Doctrine, [http://ldysinger.stjohnsem.edu/@texts/2/1585\\_jn\\_cross/03\\_john-summ.htm](http://ldysinger.stjohnsem.edu/@texts/2/1585_jn_cross/03_john-summ.htm) [accessed 9/3/13].

<sup>185</sup> Sg 2:16, 6:3, 7:10 [NASB].

Larry Warner who has adapted the Ignatius Exercises for modernity describes the goal of the exercises: “The goal of the prayer practices found in the Exercises is not to learn more about Jesus but rather to personally walk with Jesus, meet Jesus and interact with Jesus.”<sup>186</sup> Again, the goal of the Ignatian *Exercises* is identifying obstacles to intimacy and union with Christ.

### **Contemporary Voices in Spiritual Formation**

Many contemporary writers have contributed to the understanding of spiritual formation, which this researcher has defined as the pursuit of the peace and character of Christ through spiritual practice. Among those contributing writers are Richard Foster, Ruth Haley Barton, Dallas Willard, Gwen Ebner, and Father Thomas Keating. In this section the researcher will highlight those writers who have focused on more integrated models of formational practice.

#### Richard Foster

Richard Foster, an author and theologian from the Quaker tradition, was responsible for reintroducing many practices of spiritual formation and prayer to the greater body of Christ. He has authored several books on spiritual formation and prayer.

In *The Celebration of Discipline*, Foster brings spiritual practice out of the desert wilderness with monks garbed in rough cassocks and into the realm of the everyday follower of Jesus Christ. “God intends the Disciplines of the spiritual life to the ordinary

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<sup>186</sup> Larry Warner, *Journey with Jesus: Discovering the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010), 15.

human being: people who have jobs, who care for children, who wash dishes and mow lawns.”<sup>187</sup>

Foster categorizes twelve spiritual disciplines into three groups as found in the Table of Contents of this book:

The *Inward Disciplines* consisting of meditation, prayer, fasting, and study.

The *Outward Disciplines* consisting of simplicity, solitude, submission, and service.

The *Corporate Disciplines* consisting of confession, worship, guidance, and celebration.<sup>188</sup>

Foster has contributed much to the practice of prayer in diverse models. In his book, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, Foster arranges prayer in his systematic way to three movements of prayer:

*Moving Inward*, focusing on prayer for the transformation of the individual heart.

*Moving Upward*, focusing on prayer toward intimacy with God.

*Moving Outward*, focusing on prayer as ministry to others.<sup>189</sup>

Throughout Foster's writings on spiritual practice, he promotes movement toward intimacy with God and personal transformation. Foster describes the practice of prayer as coming home, emphasizing the peace of God and the believer's desire for intimate connection with the heart of God. Foster goes on to describe the effects of prayer as healing:

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<sup>187</sup> Richard Foster, *The Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (New York: Harper Collins, 1978), 1.

<sup>188</sup> Richard Foster, *The Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, vii.

<sup>189</sup> Richard Foster, *Prayer, The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition: Find the Heart's True Home* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), viii.

For too long we have been in a far country: a country of noise and hurry and crowds, a country of climb and push and shove, a country of frustration and fear and intimidation. And he welcomes us home: home to serenity and peace and joy, home to friendship and fellowship and openness, home to intimacy and acceptance and affirmation. . . . Perhaps you are bruised and broken by the pressures of life. Others have wronged you, and you feel scarred for life. You have old, painful memories that have never been healed. You avoid prayer because you feel too distant, too unworthy, too defiled. Do not despair. The Father's heart is open wide—you are welcome to come in.<sup>190</sup>

For Foster, the practice of prayer is a homecoming that includes healing and the truth of the believer's identity in Christ.

### Thomas Keating

Thomas Keating, a Catholic priest and teacher of spiritual formation, describes contemplative prayer as part of the formational journey. This is a spiritual practice that falls within the continuum dimension of *quieting*. Keating defines contemplative prayer as follows:

Contemplative prayer is a process of interior transformation, a conversation initiated by God and leading, if we consent, to divine union. One's way of seeing reality changes in this process. A restructuring of consciousness takes place which empowers one to perceive, relate and respond with increasing sensitivity to the divine presence in, through, and beyond everything that exists.<sup>191</sup>

Contemplative prayer addresses the human condition exactly where it is. This prayer heals the emotional wounds of a lifetime. It opens up the possibility of experiencing in this world the transformation into Christ to which the gospel invites us. . . . The call of the gospel, "Follow me," is addressed to every baptized person. We have with us in virtue of our baptism all the grace-given powers we need to follow Christ into the bosom of the Father. The attempt to do this—to reach more deeply toward the love of Christ within us and to manifest it more fully in the world—constitutes the heart of the spiritual journey.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Richard Foster, *Prayer, The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition: Find the Heart's True Home*, viii.

<sup>191</sup> Thomas Keating, *The Foundations for Centering Prayer and the Christian Contemplative Life* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 8.

<sup>192</sup> Thomas Keating, *Invitation to Love: The Way of Christian Contemplation* (New York: Bloomsbury, 1994), 113.

The spiritual practice of contemplative prayer is integrative in that it is practiced in quiet and involves listening to the inner voice of God, resulting in healing, restoration, and transformation toward the character and peace of Christ.

#### Ruth Haley Barton

Ruth Haley Barton is a contemporary author, writing and teaching in the area of spiritual formation and practice. Her approach also includes inner-healing prayer and transformation. The following statement by Ruth Haley Barton is central to her book: “I cannot transform myself, or anyone else for that matter. What I can do is create the conditions in which spiritual transformation can take place, by developing and maintaining a rhythm of spiritual practices that keep me open and available to God.”<sup>193</sup> Barton’s purpose in this book was to address the longing of the human heart for a deeper experience of the riches of Christ through a menu of spiritual practices. These practices shape a person’s spirituality from solitude to the sanctity of the human body. Barton’s target was the individual believer and the Christian community.<sup>194</sup>

#### Gwen Ebner

In her book, *Formed Holy in His Image: Spirit, Soul & Body*, Gwen Ebner presents a more integrated approach to spiritual formation that includes inner healing prayer. Her purpose was straightforward and succinctly stated, to “create a resource that will enable the principles of physical, spiritual, and emotional wholeness to be used with

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<sup>193</sup> Ruth Haley Barton. *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), Kindle Edition Location 73-74.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., Kindle location 1850.

individuals and groups in any setting.”<sup>195</sup> Her writing describes elements of spiritual formation and also provides practical examples and application of the spiritual practices. Ebner goes farther to include elements of formational prayer as part of the believer’s spiritual formation beyond behavior modification, writing, “Most people simply try to change their behavior without allowing the power of the Holy Spirit to heal and transform them. They are saved, but not free.”<sup>196</sup> The author sets forth the definition of formation as wholeness and holiness, becoming like Christ. To “become like Him [Christ] involves *acceptance* of Christ, *denial* of self, *difference* from the world, and inevitable *suffering* of trials.”<sup>197</sup> Ebner holds a more holistic view of spiritual formation that touches and reclaims every area of life to the Lordship of Christ.

Though the authors cited are diverse in their approaches and experiences, they all have emphasized the personal growth of the follower of Jesus Christ. While Christian counseling tends toward the linear/rational aspects of growth, the authors and teachers of spiritual formation tend toward the intuitive aspects and inner transformation.

The seeking of peace is not the sole province of the church or spiritual communities. It is universal. Recent studies in psychology and neuroscience have provided evidence of the effects of integrated formation. The final section of this chapter will outline some of the complementary studies and associated writings in these areas.

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<sup>195</sup> Gwen Ebner, *Formed Holy in His Image: Spirit, Soul, & Body* (Ebner, 2011) Kindle Edition Location 89-91.

<sup>196</sup> Ebner, Kindle Edition Location 2118-2119.

<sup>197</sup> Ebner, Kindle Edition Location 76.

## Peace, Psychology, and Neuroscience

The major religions of the world, including secular humanism, have peace as their goal. There is a stark contrast between what is understood as biblical peace and what the world would define as peace. Jesus declares peace a birthright for Christians, not based on circumstances but on the inner peace that comes through a relationship with Christ. “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”<sup>198</sup>

Where the world may define peace as the absence of conflict or a homeostatic balance between chaos and rigidity, the Christian concept of peace cannot be separated from the character and presence of Christ.

### Psychology

Psychology, and specifically cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), reflects the secular world’s quest for inner peace. Stanton L. Jones describes various influences of cognitive behavioral therapy:

Cognitive therapists believe that some human behavior is caused by internal or mental events.... internal events are seen as powerful in their own right.... thought is judged to be real and important.... cognitive therapy focuses on understanding and changing these internal events.... Cognitive behavioral therapy helps people gain control over negative thought patterns so they can also have greater flexibility with their feelings and behaviors.<sup>199</sup>

Another behavioral approach is Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT). REBT “focuses more on a view of emotional disturbance and health.”<sup>200</sup> The core

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<sup>198</sup> Jn 14:27 [NASB].

<sup>199</sup> Stanton L. Jones and Richard E. Butman, *Modern Psychotherapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 202.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

assertion of REBT is that a person's thoughts are central to understanding that person. Albert Ellis put forward the REBT approach to behavioral therapy forward.<sup>201</sup> Ellis formulated an A-B-C approach: A represents an activating event, B represents the individual's beliefs about that event, and C represents the consequent emotions arising from the event. "It is common for people to attribute their emotional or behavioral consequence to activating events. According to Ellis, people are not really disturbed by events themselves, but by the beliefs they hold about those events."<sup>202</sup> The therapist practicing REBT attempts to adjust the beliefs regarding the activating event and make it congruent the emotional response. "Ellis taught clients to dispute (D) these irrational thoughts in order to achieve a more hopeful cognitive effect (E)."<sup>203</sup>

In summary, psychology has echoed the search for personal inner peace through various behavioral approaches including CBT and REBT.

### Emotional Wholeness and Neuroscience

In recent years, researchers in neuroscience have begun to understand and make the connection between functions of the brain and the peace of followers of world religions including Christianity. Andrew Newberg has observed the activity in the human brain while individuals experience spiritual practices such as meditation:

Different religious activities have different effects on specific parts of the brain, but this does not make the results any easier to interpret. For example, praying silently affects one part of the brain, while praying out loud affects another part. And if you repeat the same prayer over and over, one part of the brain may be

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<sup>201</sup> Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy was developed by Albert Ellis in his book, *A Guide to Rational Living* (Chatsworth, CA: Wilshire Book Company, 1975).

<sup>202</sup> Albert Ellis, *A Guide to Rational Living* (Chatsworth, CA: Wilshire Book Company, 1975), 214.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

activated in the first few minutes, another part might quiet down ten minutes later, while other brain functions will change after forty or fifty minutes of intense prayer.<sup>204</sup>

Various spiritual practices affect different parts of the brain. Understanding the functions of various parts of the brain gives insight to create programs of spiritual practice that allow those who use these practices to tailor such practices to meet the specific needs of individual believers in their pursuit of personal peace. For example, individuals with issues of fear and anxiety may profit from meditative or relaxation practices that touch the limbic system of the brain to bring calm. Newberg describes the functions of the various parts of the human brain as they relate to an awareness of God:

**OCCIPITAL-PARIETAL CIRCUIT** Identifies God as an object that exists in the world. Young children see God as a face because their brains cannot process abstract spiritual concepts.

**PARIETAL-FRONTAL CIRCUIT** Establishes a relationship between the two objects known as “you” and “God.” It places God in space and allows you to experience God's presence. If you decrease activity in your parietal lobe through meditation or intense prayer, the boundaries between you and God dissolve. You feel a sense of unity with the object of contemplation and your spiritual beliefs.

**FRONTAL LOBE** Creates and integrates all of your ideas about God—positive or negative—including the logic you use to evaluate your religious and spiritual beliefs. It predicts your future in relationship to God and attempts to intellectually answer all the “why, what, and where” questions raised by spiritual issues.

**THALAMUS** Gives emotional meaning to your concepts of God. The thalamus gives you a holistic sense of the world and appears to be the key organ that makes God feel objectively real.

**AMYGDALA** When overly stimulated, the amygdala creates the emotional impression of a frightening, authoritative, and punitive God, and it suppresses the frontal lobe's ability to logically think about God.

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<sup>204</sup>Andrew Newberg and Mark Robert Waldman, *How God Changes Your Brain: Breakthrough Findings from a Leading Neuroscientist* (New York: Random House, 2009), Kindle Edition location 742-745.

STRIATUM Inhibits activity in the amygdala, allowing you to feel safe in the presence of God, or of whatever object or concept you are contemplating.

ANTERIOR CINGULATE allows you to experience God as loving and compassionate. It decreases religious anxiety, guilt, fear, and anger by suppressing activity in the amygdala.

LIMBIC SYSTEM The limbic system consists of the amygdala, hippocampus, hypothalamus, and thalamus, in addition to other regions not shown.<sup>205</sup> [The] limbic system is involved with memory encoding, emotional response, and many other bodily functions.<sup>206</sup>

A detailed explanation of the interaction of parts of the human brain is beyond the scope and focus of this project and expertise of the researcher. However, studies in neurobiology by Andrew Newburg, Daniel Amen, and others have established that the reality that to heal and restore the whole person involves an integrated approach that involves various parts of the brain. (See Appendix B.)

The idea of integrating spiritual practices involving different parts of the human mind of soul is not new. From the days of the early church to the present time with new ability to understand the working of the human brain, believers have faithfully pursued peace through spiritual practices. New revelations regarding the variety and interdependence of parts of the brain have clarified empirically what has been observed experientially. Spiritual practices affect the human brain. “Long before neuroscientists began advocating these approaches, believers engaged in spiritual practices that foster the mind’s development—whether we call it an undivided heart or an integrated prefrontal

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<sup>205</sup>Newburg and Waldman, Kindle Edition Location 742-745.

<sup>206</sup>Newburg and Waldman, Kindle Locations 308-309.

cortex. . . . In many ways, these disciplines, when practiced faithfully (but without burden), do the very things that we have been discussing to help integrate our brains.”<sup>207</sup>

Thompson writes of the integration of both right and left hemispheres of the brain, involving both the linear and intuitive aspects. Thompson further describes them as the “We and I” hemispheres:

We and I: together but separate. Although the left and right hemispheres have separate functions, their integration is crucial. The right hemisphere’s contribution is to imagine it as the part of the brain that enables us to be enraptured in the present moment. Its holistic processing enables us to feel connected to everything around us through the multiple sensory modalities of our bodies and minds. It provides no distinct sense of a separate “I” but rather a deep awareness of the sensation of “we,” a sense of connection. This hemisphere drives us to feel at one with the universe, with no concept of past or future. In the right-hemisphere neural regions, time as such does not exist, which means we are unencumbered by our awareness of the painful memories of our past or our anxieties of the future. . . . Since the left hemisphere is governed by a linear mode of operation, its networks are committed to logically solving problems like a flat tire. It progressively enables you to find the jack in the trunk of the car, take off the lug nuts, and replace the flat tire. It likes order and for things to “make sense.” The left hemisphere is all about the past and the future. It tends to systematically take in all the data that the right hemisphere is transponding to it through the corpus callosum and linearly, logically compare that to what is stored in its neurobiological history. Its focus is on “me” as distinct from the rest of creation. The left hemisphere, through its ability to analyze, enables each of us to distinguish ourselves from one another in order to know who “I” am and what “I” want. We enjoy the idea of having a sense of individuality, of being a separate “me”—that is, until we begin to collect all of our emotional baggage that is uniquely “mine” and feel the separation of loneliness and isolation. The left hemisphere, then, tends to be more dominant in situations in which we seek to “know” things.<sup>208</sup>

The distinctions in the hemispheres of the human brain are important to spiritual formation. The neurophysiology of the human brain echoes the formational continuum in

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<sup>207</sup> Curt Thompson, *Anatomy of the Soul: Surprising Connections between Neuroscience and Spiritual Practices that Can Transform Your Life and Relationships* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2010), 175.

<sup>208</sup> Thompson, 36-37.

that for the human brain to fully grasp experience a concept, all parts much function together. So it is with the human spirituality. It is the difference between knowing and experiencing.

Daniel J. Siegel, a researcher in neuroscience and a practicing physician, writes in the area of personal transformation. He comments on the right and left hemispheres of the brain and how they must work together to be whole or integrated. Siegel recounted a patient who was very disconnected to people as a result of his family background and early childhood environment. Siegel was able to do integrative exercises that he refers to as SNAG, for Stimulate Neuronal Activation and Growth.<sup>209</sup> The patient experienced and processed life mostly from the left hemisphere of the brain, which is more concerned with the linear and rational aspects of awareness. In order to bring the patient into a more balanced mindset, Siegel used an exercise referred to as a “body scan.”<sup>210</sup> In the body scan, the care-receiver is asked to focus on aspects of their physical body to create awareness. Somatic or bodily awareness is processed mostly in the right hemisphere of the human brain. As the patient was able to acknowledge his physical body, he was activating the right hemisphere of the brain. Siegel progressed from the somatic awareness to using imagery, asking the patient to describe favorite childhood memories or a favorite beach location. Using language, which is the prerogative of the left hemisphere to describe an image, a right brain activity, brought further integration of the hemispheres and integration.<sup>211</sup> In other words, through the use of practices that activated

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<sup>209</sup> Daniel J. Siegel, *The Mindful Brain: The New Science of Personal Transformation* (New York: Random House, 2010), 110.

<sup>210</sup> Siegel, *The Mindful Brain*, 111.

<sup>211</sup> This case study is summarized from: Daniel J. Siegel, *The New Science of Personal Transformation* (New York: Random House, 2010), 110-114.

both right and left hemispheres of the care-receiver's brain, he was brought to integration, balance, and peace.

This balance and movement from one part of us to another may also be seen once again through the Scriptures:

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life — and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us — what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.<sup>212</sup>

Reading this passage with an awareness of the neuroscience demonstrates a movement and progression toward greater awareness and personal experience of Christ. There is a movement from head to heart or from the left linear to the right intuitive and experiential hemispheres of the brain. The progression of these verses begins with only the concept of Christ, “what was from the beginning,” written in a neuter form. Then it progresses to “what we have heard,” using the Greek word *akouō*, to hear which is a statement of awareness. “What we have seen” uses the simple Greek word for seeing, *horaō*, that is a simple knowing but then coming to a deeper knowing saying, “what we have looked at,” *theaomai*, to behold or envision or contemplate. Then finally the personal experiencing of Christ, “what we have touched with our hands”, is using the word *psēlaphaō*.

The author of these verses is recounting a progression of the experience of Christ as a mere concept, to awareness, to a simple knowledge, then a deeper contemplative

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<sup>212</sup> 1 Jn. 1:1-4 [NASB].

knowledge of Christ which then touches and transforms the reader from believer to follower of Christ. This progression toward the peace and character of Christ is progression toward intimate relationship. In a simple sense, it is like the progression of any relationship, such as a person being in the next room that one does not yet know. Believers then hear the voice of that person beginning an awareness of their personal presence. The one who hears then walks to the door of the next room and sees the person's face. A more intimate, face-to-face conversation ensues resulting in deeper knowledge and transformation.

The spiritual practices along the formational continuum facilitate this movement from head to heart, if you will, and allow the believer in Christ to become a follower of Christ. There is a greater awareness and healing that takes place to the deeper intimacy and transformation in God. One quiets his or her self, to listen to the voice of Christ calling them forth, reaching the deeper places to unbind and restore, and to allow them to continue our journey of becoming toward the peace and character of Jesus Christ.

### **Application to the Formational Continuum**

Each of the approaches and disciplines mentioned in this chapter moves in some way toward the peace and character of Christ. Each of them involves coming to personal peace and transformation in some sense. The definition and scope of peace and transformation differs from among the various approaches mentioned. Each of them also expresses one or more dimensions of the continuum. Inner healing or formational prayer models in general focus on the restoring dimension, while they may also include listening to the voice of God. Christian counseling approaches express the listening and transformational dimensions.

Each of the approaches discussed in this chapter may be made more effective if they are incorporated with other dimensions of the formational continuum in an integrated approach. For example, the formational models may be made more effective as the facilitator and care-receiver employ the practices of quieting and becoming to continue the healing journey. The Christian counseling approaches may be made more effective if they would go beyond external behavioral correction and employ the restoring practices of the continuum to arrive at the root of the emotional dysfunction. As this study investigates aspects of integration, more detailed recommendations exist in the final chapter of this project after having the data are gathered, presented, and interpreted.

The question Jesus asked his first two followers is relevant at the beginning and the end of this chapter. What do you seek? What is sought, by whatever means, is the peace of Jesus Christ. This peace includes and necessitates moving in with Christ through the spiritual practices that touch not only behavior and emotional regulation but go deeper to heal the wounds, unbinding followers to continue on their journey into the riches of Christ.

### **Summary**

Chapters One and Two provided an overview and historical/theological basis for this project, which is the description and seeking of an integrated approach to spiritual formation, progressing along an interactive and dynamic formational continuum with dimensions of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming. Chapter Three provided a comparison among several approaches in moving toward the character and peace of Jesus Christ through spiritual practice. Chapter Four will cover the development and testing of this integrated model, including a model for testing that adheres to the formational

continuum. This chapter will also identify the instruments by which the researcher will measure the movement in the pursuit of the character and peace of Jesus Christ to determine the efficacy of the integrated approach to spiritual formation.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

#### **Introduction**

In this research project, the researcher has identified the need for what is referred to in this project as an integrated model of spiritual formation. This approach to spiritual formation follows a formational continuum with four dimensions of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming. It is the hypothesis of the researcher that such an integrated model will allow followers of Christ to move toward the peace and character of Jesus Christ through spiritual practices related to the formational continuum.

#### Purpose Statement

In this research project, the researcher will introduce and test an integrated model of spiritual formation to measure the movement toward the peace and character of Christ. The problem identified in this research project is the need of an approach to spiritual formation that addressed more than behavioral change. The measurement of change will be done through both quantitative and qualitative methods: quantitatively through a survey instrument developed for this project, and qualitatively through a structured interview guide. This chapter will present the hypothesis and the research methods, including a description of the research design, the population and sample, the variables being measured, the development of the survey and interview guide, and a brief description of the data analysis and conclusion.

### **Research Question and Hypothesis**

The underlying research question being investigated in this project asks: What effect does an integrated model of spiritual formation, which includes facets of quieting, listening, restoring and becoming, have in leading believers toward the peace and character of Christ? This question leads to the generalized hypothesis that believers who practice an integrated model of spiritual formation will grow in the peace and character of Christ. The specific hypothesis for this study is delineated further as follows:

1. Believers who practice an integrated model of spiritual formation will see God differently than those who do not practice an integrated model.
2. Believers who practice an integrated model of spiritual formation will see other people differently than those who do not practice an integrated model.
3. Believers who practice an integrated model of spiritual formation will see themselves differently than those who do not practice an integrated model.

It is the hypothesis of the researcher that through the use of an integrated model of spiritual formation, those participating in the experimental group for this project will demonstrate growth in the peace and character of Jesus Christ. That growth will be observed in three facets: Upward growth toward God, outward growth toward other people, and inward growth toward self. The movement toward the peace and character of Christ will be measured in both quantitative and qualitative surveys described below. The integrated model for spiritual formation will include an intentional and inductive healing aspect making what is referred to alternatively as inner healing, formational prayer, or restorative prayer, a normative part of the believer's spiritual formation toward the peace and character of Christ.

## Methods and Procedures

During the course of the research period of this project, a wide variety of research subjects from throughout the body of Christ will be given a forty-day meditation constructed along the formational continuum identified in this project. This meditation is the treatment developed for this research project. The research subjects will be asked to complete a quantitative survey to measure their growth in the character and peace of Christ. They will be pretested and posttested using the quantitative survey to investigate any change that has occurred during the forty-day period. A qualitative survey will be added at the conclusion of the forty-day period to elicit data on the personal effect of the forty-day period as well as the experience of the individuals in the personal restorative prayer. Individuals will be invited to complete the qualitative survey at the conclusion of the data collection period.

In addition to the experimental group there will also be a control group. The control group will be asked to complete the same pretest and posttest given to the experimental group. They will follow their normal spiritual routine throughout the forty-day period instead following the treatment. Change will also be measured through the same pre-test and post-test applied to the experimental group.

## Research Design

Earl Babbie, a social researcher, writes of the classic experimental research design. "The most conventional type of experiment, in the natural as well as the social

sciences, involved three major pairs of components: (1) independent and dependent variables, (2) experimental and control groups, and (3) pre-testing and post-testing.<sup>213</sup>

This research process will use the simple and classic research design shown in

Figure 4.1 seen below, along with the explanation of the components.

Figure 4.1 Experimental design

	R	O <sub>1</sub>	X	O <sub>2</sub>
	R	O <sub>1</sub>		O <sub>2</sub>

R = Random assignment to groups

O<sub>1</sub> = Observation

X = Treatment

As will be mentioned later, the research subjects are self-selecting in the project. There is one experimental group and one control group selected by random assignment through the use of web pages and social media on the Internet. The experimental group will experience a daily formational journey through an Internet website, completing 35 devotional chapters from the Integrated Formational Devotional (IFD) based on an augmented version of *The Healing Journey* model during the forty-day period. Members of this group will complete the Integrated Formational Survey (IFS) at the beginning and the conclusion of the forty-day research period to measure change. The (IFS) will be discussed late in this chapter.

As previously stated, there will be a control group that follows their normal patterns of devotion. The patterns of devotion are described in the first section of the quantitative survey as to their normal devotional routines. The control group will not be given any new materials or instruction to alter their normal patterns or devotion.

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<sup>213</sup> Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, 5th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1989), 213.

### Research Population

The population invited to take part in this research project will be Christian believers from diverse cultural, denominational, and demographic backgrounds. Subjects in the study are invited through Internet, social media, and through the personal contact list of the researcher through email. Others may elect to join the study through personal invitation or at the invitation of other subjects. There is no attempt to gather individuals from any particular part of the body of Christ.

### Data Collection

The survey data collection will occur through *Survey Monkey* via the Internet. The research subjects will be assigned a numerical identity for the study. The data collection period will cover sixty days from the invitation to the final cut off. All survey subjects will be required to complete the thirty-five devotional items of the treatment by the final day that will be stated on the invitation. This extended period of time is designed to allow the maximum participation and diversity of the sample. For the sake of constancy, all data will be gathered through the Internet, thus holding the identity of the individuals in the study anonymous and confidential.

### Dependent and Independent Variables

The presence of the character and peace of Christ are the dependent variables that are affected by the administration of the treatment or stimulus, which is the forty-day Integrated Formational Devotion (IFD) described later in the chapter. This IFD is an independent variable. Those in the experimental group will follow the IFD.

Because this research project is voluntary, there is a selection issue as they are choosing to be involved or not involved. So this will be treated as a nonequivalent control group, experimental design. Cook and Campbell discuss the threat of self-selecting in terms of internal validity requires that the analysis taken into account possible variables that may influence the dependent variable. Cook and Campbell write, “When self-selection occurs, treatments are more likely to become more available to the especially meritorious or to personas with keen desires to ‘improve themselves.’”<sup>214</sup> The desire for spiritual growth may, in fact, affect the results on the retest for those in the control group. Therefore, additional independent variables other than the experiential treatment (as defined by the experimental and control groups) will be included to control for potentially porous effects. Independent variables include the following:

Gender of the participant

- Male
- Female

Marital status

- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- In a domestic partnership or civil union
- Single, but cohabitating with a significant other
- Single, never married

What is your present age?

- 18 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75 or older

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<sup>214</sup> Thomas D. Cook and Donald Thomas Campbell, *Quasi-experimentation: Design and Analysis Issues for Field Settings* (Skokie, IL: Rand McNally, 1979), 106.

What best describes the frequency of church attendance?

- I do not attend a church
- Less than once a month
- Once a month
- Twice a month
- More than twice a month

What best describes your current denominational background?

- Catholic
- Mainline denomination, i.e. Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist
- Evangelical
- Charismatic/Pentecostal
- Independent
- House church
- Unchurched
- Other

What best describes your level of education?

- Not finished High School
- High School or GED graduate
- 2-4 years of college
- Masters degree
- Post graduate degree

What best describes your present vocation?

- Professional
- Salaried employee
- Hourly employee
- Stay at home parent with children\Stay at home without children
- Unemployed

### Research Sample

The population for this project will be believers from diverse cultural, denominational, and demographic backgrounds. The research subjects in the study are invited through Internet and social media and through the personal contact list of the researcher through an e-mail blast. Others may elect to join the study through personal invitation or at the invitation of other subjects.

## The Integrated Formational Model

The purpose of this project is to identify and test an integrated approach to spiritual formation that results in movement toward the peace and character of Jesus Christ. The integrated approach to spiritual formation follows a formational continuum with four dimensions of practice: quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming. Each of these dimensions provides a classification for various kinds of spiritual practices. For example, the dimension of quieting is applied through the practice of centering prayer, while the dimension of restoring is applied through inner healing prayer. For the purpose of this research project, these dimensions will be applied through a predetermined model that includes a daily routine employing the practices of the formational continuum. This is done for the sake of consistency of those participating in the project to remove a variability of practice of the experimental group.

The IFD consists of an inductive, daily devotional that includes reflective reading and meditation on a verse or verses of Scripture that are topically arranged. The experimental group may also enter into an inductive healing prayer if they encounter passages that do not feel true to them personally. For example, the passage may read, “Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”<sup>215</sup> This may not agree with the participant’s experience. It is at that point that the participant enters into the inductive healing prayer to experience the truth of that passage. (See Appendix B.)

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<sup>215</sup> Dt 31:6 [ESV].

## Quantitative and Qualitative Surveys

### The Quantitative Survey

For the quantitative aspect of this project, both the experimental and control groups for this research will complete a survey based on a five-point Likert scale referred to here after as the Integrated Formational Survey (IFS). Both the research and control groups for this research project will be tested at the beginning of a forty-day formational period and will then be retested at the conclusion of the research process using the same IFS developed by the researcher of this project.

The IFS is derived from Galatians 5:22-23: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”<sup>216</sup> When measuring the peace and character of Jesus Christ, one can look to what the Apostle Paul referred to as the “fruit of the Spirit.” These are the result of walking and being led by the Spirit of God. Each word was chosen for the IFS based upon the researcher’s examination of the Greek text of Galatians 5:22-23 and the usage of each of the original Greek words in their various forms throughout the New Testament.

#### *Content Validity of the Quantitative Survey*

The validity of the content in the development of the Integrated Formational Survey was established by citing similar surveys, a vetting of the survey by experts in pastoral care, and through biblical exegesis of Galatians 5:22-23.

In investigating the content validity for the use of Galatians 5:22-23 for this survey tool, two examples of studies developing a similar survey tool are noted below.

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<sup>216</sup> Gal 5:22-23 [ESV].

Michael Zigarelli at Messiah College developed a survey labeled “Christian Character Index.” The Index was created by an exegetical investigation and collation of Colossians 3:12-14 and Galatians 5:22-23 and vetted by faculty of Regent University.<sup>217</sup>

Another example of the use of the Galatians 5:22-23 as a quantitative measure of spiritual growth was developed by Equipping Ministries International in 1993.<sup>218</sup> It arranged the fruit of the Spirit along a ten-point scale, describing the positive and negative aspect of growth in those character traits with three words at either end of the scale.

### *Survey Vetting*

The IFS developed by the researcher was also vetted among a diverse group of six evangelical pastors, including experts in pastoral care. The clergy denominations represented United Methodist, Free Lutheran, Assemblies of God, Free Methodist, and an independent house church pastor. They were given a copy of the IFS and invited to evaluate it and give feedback through E-mail. There was also a meeting following their comments on the survey. They were invited to respond to a questionnaire. (See Appendix C)

### Biblical Exegesis of Galatians 5:22-23

The Fruit of the Spirit consists of three groups of three indications of character formation in the lives of followers of Jesus Christ through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The first three reflect the *upward* relationship with God, the second three reflect the

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<sup>217</sup> Michael Zigarelli, *Christian Character Index*, <http://www.assess-yourself.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/CCIdesign.pdf> [Accessed 7/13/2013].

<sup>218</sup> Gary Sweeten, David Ping, and Ann Clippard, *Listening for Heaven's Sake: Building Relationships with God, Self, and Others* (Cincinnati: Teleios Publications, 1993), ix.

*outward* effect of the Spirit's working toward other people, and the last three reflect the *inward* resulting work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of believers. In the following survey, three facets of meaning are provided for each fruit of the Spirit. These are by no means the only facets of the words but are among the major shades of meaning and usage of various Greek words.

### Love /*Agape*

The Greek word *agape* reflects the aspects of selflessness and giving. Love is the very nature of God. "The one who does not know love does not know God, for God is love."<sup>219</sup> Hence, the fruit of the Spirit grows out of and expresses the very nature and character of God as incarnate by Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Love is others-centered versus self-centered. Love entails a moving away from self toward the good and affection of others. Love is sacrificial in nature, epitomized in the supreme sacrifice of the Son of God for the love of mankind. "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."<sup>220</sup>

Love is generous versus withholding. *Agape* also expresses the idea of giving. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."<sup>221</sup>

Love is caring versus uncaring. *Agape* is expressed through the caring affection for others. It is in this caring affection with which believers serve one another. "For you

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<sup>219</sup> 1 Jn 4:8 [NASB].

<sup>220</sup> Jn 15:13 [NASB].

<sup>221</sup> Jn 3:16 [NASB].

were called to freedom, brethren; only *do* not *turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”<sup>222</sup>

### Joy / *Chara*

The Greek word *chara*, translated in Galatians 5:22 as joy, represents the effects of the love of God in the hearts of believers ransomed by Christ. *Chara* denotes fullness and satisfaction. Joy is more than happiness and gives a sense of blessedness.

Joy is satisfied versus dissatisfied as if full. It was the desire of Jesus that his followers would experience the end of striving and the satisfaction of a life of abiding in his love. As Jesus was teaching his followers about abiding in him he said, “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full.”<sup>223</sup>

Joy is glad versus gloomy as in the coming of the Messiah, Jesus. “You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.”<sup>224</sup>

Joy is the sense of being triumphant versus defeated as when the disciples of Jesus returned to him after a triumphant mission. “The seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’”<sup>225</sup>

### Peace / *Eirene*

The Greek word *eirene*, translated peace, brings a similar sense as the Hebrew word *shalom*. Peace is the chief benefit announced by the angels at the birth of Jesus:

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<sup>222</sup> Gal 5:13 [NASB].

<sup>223</sup> Jn 15:11 [NASB].

<sup>224</sup> Lk 1:14 [NASB].

<sup>225</sup> Lk 10:17 [NASB].

“Peace on earth.”<sup>226</sup> Peace, as an aspect of Christian character, is the peace of God, peace with God, and peace from God.

Peace indicates a heart that is at rest versus restless. Peace comes as a result of healing, such as with the woman who had the issue of blood and strove for so long to find healing. Jesus said, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction.”<sup>227</sup>

Peace carries the meaning of being secure versus insecure as when Jesus related the image of a person guarding his house. “When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe.”<sup>228</sup> The sacrificial love of God demonstrated in Christ brings us to the ultimate security and peace.

Peace brings the feeling of being confident versus unsure. “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”<sup>229</sup> The peace of God brings leads to confidence and allows us to express the life of Christ, as when Zacharias declared the blessings of the coming Messiah. “To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear.”<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Lk 2:14 [NLT].

<sup>227</sup> Mk 5:34 [NASB].

<sup>228</sup> Lk 11:21 [ESV].

<sup>229</sup> Jn 16:33 [ESV].

<sup>230</sup> Lk 1:74 [NASB].

### Patience / *Makrothumia*

The Greek word *makrothumia*, translated patience or longsuffering, is literally the ability to keep the emotional temperature under control. Patience must be expressed to be seen. It is an attitude or disposition toward other people that allows believers to be sustained and secure in the love of God, to wait under pressure or stress.

Patient versus impatient is an indication of this fruit of the Spirit toward other people. When God made promises to Abraham regarding his future blessing, Abraham was able to believe God: “and thus Abraham, having patiently waited, obtained the promise.”<sup>231</sup>

Patience is the ability to be steady versus reactive. “Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, *and* sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium *and* at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me!”<sup>232</sup>

Patience is the ability to be tolerant versus intolerant as the Apostle Paul directs believers in Ephesus to live out the gospel “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love.”<sup>233</sup>

### Kindness / *Chrestotes*

The Greek word *chrestotes*, from the noun *chrestos* translated as kindness, is an attitude of the heart of God who is secure and supreme above all. *Chrestotes* also carries the thought of goodness and benevolence of God in his kindness toward man.

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<sup>231</sup> Heb 6:15 [ESV].

<sup>232</sup> 2 Ti 3:10 [NASB].

<sup>233</sup> Eph 4:2 [NASB].

Kind versus unkind may refer to the benevolence of God's heart that loves with great compassion. "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"<sup>234</sup>

Kindness is an attitude of being mild versus harsh. When Jesus mentions the new wine versus old wine, he refers to the old using this same Greek word, translated in English as good. "And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.'"<sup>235</sup> The good wine is the mild, aged, and mature vintage.

Kindness is being considerate versus inconsiderate toward other people. The Apostle Paul wrote that God, seeing that believers were separated from him, seated them with Christ, "so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."<sup>236</sup>

#### Goodness / *Agathosune*

*Agathosune* stems from *agathos* and is translated goodness. This is ethical or moral goodness toward other people. *Agathos* generally refers to the goodness of or from God. The fruit of the Spirit translated goodness is an expression of the goodness of God toward others.

Goodness in the sense of ethical versus unethical, as in walking in the light and presence of Christ who is the Light. "For the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth."<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Rom 2:4 [NASB].

<sup>235</sup> Lk 5:39 [ESV].

<sup>236</sup> Eph 2:6-7 [NASB].

<sup>237</sup> Eph 5:9 [NASB].

Goodness can infer being charitable versus uncharitable, that brings in the idea of giving to another person out of the goodness of God. The young man who sought eternal life from Jesus put it in terms of good works. “And someone came to Him and said, ‘Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?’”<sup>238</sup>

Goodness can be character, which is godly versus ungodly. “To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power.”<sup>239</sup>

#### Faithfulness / *Pistis*

The spiritual fruit of faithfulness refers to the formation of inner character as a result of the believer’s experience and expression of Christ.

Faithfulness manifests in the believer’s ability to trust versus being fearful. When Jesus and his disciples were in a boat on a storm-tossed sea the disciples became afraid. “And He said to them, ‘Where is your faith?’ They were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, ‘Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?’”<sup>240</sup>

Faithfulness can be the believer’s ability to be reliable versus unreliable as when Jesus recounted the story of the servant who invested his master’s resources wisely. “And he said to him, ‘Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.’”<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Mt 19:16 [NASB].

<sup>239</sup> 2 Thes 1:11 [NASB].

<sup>240</sup> Lk 8:25 [NASB].

<sup>241</sup> Lk 19:17 [NASB].

Faithfulness may be the believer's ability to be honest versus dishonest. Jesus pointed out the lack of integrity and consistency in the administration of the Pharisees of his time. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others."<sup>242</sup>

#### Gentleness / *Prautes*

The fruit of gentleness refers to a state of inner calm of a transformed heart that is confident in the love of God.

Gentleness versus insensitive is a character trait flowing from a secure heart giving the ability to respond to others in love more than law. "What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?"<sup>243</sup>

Gentleness can be the believer's ability to receive the word of God or correction from others in the body of Christ. It is teachable versus non-receptive. "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."<sup>244</sup>

Gentleness is expressed in an attitude of being humble versus proud. "Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ — I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!"<sup>245</sup>

#### Self-control / *Egkrateia*

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<sup>242</sup> Mt 23:23 [ESV].

<sup>243</sup> 1 Co 4:21 [NASB].

<sup>244</sup> Jas 1:21 [NASB].

<sup>245</sup> 2 Co 10:1 [NASB].

Self-control reflects the inner ability or character trait to be disciplined versus undisciplined. This discipline is like the athlete in a contest who trains and eliminates anything that would interfere with his or her running an unhindered race. “Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.”<sup>246</sup>

Self-control may be calm versus impulsive. Self-control can also imply one who is able to be in control of his or her faculties and passions versus someone who is bound to carnal reaction. Paul used this word to describe the traits of one desirous of governing the household of God. “For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled.”<sup>247</sup>

Self-control may be free versus bound. The Apostle Paul uses this Greek word to describe freedom and bondage as applied to those living under grace or law—free versus bound. “But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise.”<sup>248</sup>

The subjects of this research project are provided these simple instructions:

Thank you for your participation in this forty-day journey. In order to estimate the effects of and growth in the Holy Spirit in your spiritual journey please complete the following Integrated Formational Survey (IFS), rating each word according to your best estimation. Select one of the five points along between the descriptive words that best reflects your development in that aspect of character development at this point in your spiritual journey. Please note that the IFS is anonymous. You will be automatically be assigned a numerical identity. No one, including the

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<sup>246</sup> 1 Co 9:25 [NASB].

<sup>247</sup> Ti 1:7-8 [NASB].

<sup>248</sup> Gal 4:23 [NASB].

researchers, will know your identity. Please be truthful in your responses to the survey according to your own spiritual journey as it is and not what it may be someday or what you think they should be.

The surveys and the materials, based on an expanded version of *The Healing Journey*, will be presented online on a designated website for ease of access and economy. Invitations will go out on the Internet via E-mail, social media, and other mailing lists.

### **The Qualitative Survey**

A qualitative survey will be performed at the conclusion of the forty-day research period. This survey instrument will be administered through e-mail with an optional telephone interview. An invitation will be sent to a random group made up from both the treatment and control groups. The interview for this qualitative survey will seek information from subjects from the experimental group concerning the personal effects of their experience of the forty-day journey. (See Appendix D for the qualitative survey)

### **Summary**

The purpose of this research project is to develop and test an integrated model for spiritual formation based on a continuum of practices with facets of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming. The integrated Formational Devotional (IFD) is based upon the augmented version of *The Healing Journey* that includes each of the facets listed above. An inductive prayer format is included to address obstacles to belief of biblical truths presented in the devotional. Participants in both the control and experimental groups will complete to a qualitative survey on the character and peace of Christ developed by the researcher for this project. This project is a pretest, posttest, quasi-experimental design

with an additional qualitative survey to gather data on the effect of this study period on the individual participant.

Chapter Five of this project will analyze the data collected and prepare for the observations and recommendations of the researcher for a more integrative approach to spiritual formation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter the researcher will briefly review the purpose of the research project and discuss the research model, the method of data collection, the survey sample, the variables within the model, a statistical analysis of the data, and a critique of the model developed for this project. In simple terms: What was the project designed to discover? How was it discovered? How was the method of discovery, the Integrated Formational Survey (IFS), validated? What was discovered from the results of the pre-test and posttest surveys? What do those results say about the method of discovery?

The project began with the discussion of the nature and definition of spiritual formation. The researcher's contention was that spiritual formation was described mostly in behavioral terms. Therefore, a fuller and more integrated definition was sought for spiritual formation of the believer. Spiritual formation was defined as the believer's journey toward the character and peace of Christ through spiritual practice. A continuum of practices with four dimensions of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming was identified in Chapter Two of this project. In order to measure the progress toward the peace and character of Christ, the researcher developed a survey based on the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. Each of the words mentioned as a fruit of the Spirit was presented in three aspects based on the exegesis of the Greek text of Galatians 5:22-23.

The total of twenty-seven aspects were arranged in along a five point Likert scale. (See Appendix Chapter Four.)

### **Review of Research Model**

The underlying research question investigated in this project asked: What effect does an integrated model of spiritual formation, which includes facets of quieting, listening, restoring and becoming, have in leading believers toward the peace and character of Christ? This question led to the generalized hypothesis that believers who practice an integrated model of spiritual formation will grow in the peace and character of Christ.

### **Data Collection Methods**

In order to test the researcher's hypothesis, the survey was developed through SurveyMonkey and sent to participants, who were recruited through the social network Facebook and the researcher's personal e-mail list. The invitation to participate was sent to 773 individuals with a total of ninety-two successful responses, a response rate of 11.9%. The IFS included two parts. Part one inquired into demographic information that will be helpful in factor analysis later in this chapter. This information inquired into age, gender, educational level, church attendance, denominational background, present vocation, and current spiritual practice of individual respondents. Part two was the formational survey that used the Galatians 5:22-23 fruit of the Spirit passage presented in twenty-seven questions arranged along a five-point Likert scale.

Respondents completed the IFS online through SurveyMonkey via an assigned individual hyperlink. Respondents were then randomly assigned to a control group and an

experimental group. The experimental group was sent a Microsoft Word document containing a forty-day, inductive devotional arranged according to the integrated model identified by the researcher. (See Chapter Four Appendices.) The control group was also asked to complete the IFS and follow their typical patterns of spiritual practice. The initial collector was output to an SPSS spreadsheet with the respondents remaining anonymous, identified only by e-mail address.<sup>249</sup>

At the end of a forty-day research period the IFS was sent once again to both groups via a new collector, which was exported to an SPSS analytical spreadsheet. The demographics of the respondents differed slightly from the demographics in the survey because of a condensation of actual responses. The demographics in the spreadsheet were based upon actual responses.

It is noted here that a significant number of individuals in the experimental group did not respond to the posttest invitation. Nearly forty-seven percent, twenty-two individuals out of forty-six, did not complete the devotional. The researcher was not able to find any significant correlation or profile for these individuals. The qualitative data at the end of this chapter indicated that many of the individuals found the devotional too time consuming and, therefore, dropped out. Some of the reasons for the participants dropping out were more fully revealed through qualitative responses. Other possible reasons for this will be discussed further in Chapter Six of this project.

### **Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents**

The following table highlights the survey respondents by each of the demographic categories in the IFS. Note that while there were forty-six participants in the control

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<sup>249</sup> IBM Corp. Released 2013. IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 22.0. Armonk, NY: IBM Corp.

group and an equal number in the experimental group, there were twenty-one individuals in the experimental group who did not complete the forty-day integrated devotional. This will be discussed further in Chapter Six.

Table 5.1 Pretest demographics of pretest respondents

Category	Detail	Survey Response	
		Frequency	Percent
Religious Affiliation	Catholic	1	1.56
	Mainline	10	15.63
	Evangelical	20	31.35
	Charismatic	14	21.88
	Independent	15	23.44
	Other	4	6.25
Employment	Professional	26	40.63
	Salaried	8	12.50
	Hourly	12	18.75
	Home w/kids	4	6.25
	Home no/kids	7	10.94
	Unemployed	7	10.94
Devotion Pretest*	Daily	44	68.75
	Occasional	19	29.69
	None	1	1.56
Devotion Posttest*	1	4	6.25
	0	51	79.69
	1	9	14.06
Gender	Male	21	32.81
	Female	43	67.19

Marital Status	Married	50	78.13
	Widowed	2	3.13
	Divorced	5	7.81
	Separated	1	1.56
	Single	6	9.38
Age Bracket	18 to 25	2	3.13
	25 to 34	2	3.13
	35 to 44	5	7.81
	45 to 54	28	43.75
	55 to 64	17	26.56
	65 to 74	9	14.06
	75 or older	1	1.56
Attend Church 2X Month	No	4	6.25
	Yes	60	93.75
Level of Education	High School	17	26.56
	College	24	37.50
	Graduate	16	25.00
	Post Graduate	7	10.94

\* Change took place between pretest and posttest times

## Variable Generation

### Dependent Variables

The dependent variables described and analyzed in this section are the survey questions associated with the Integrated Formational Survey (IFS) and were designed to measure an individual's spirituality. The respondents were asked to rate the items in the IFS based upon the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. It was proposed that these dependent variables would be affected by the administration of the treatment in this project.

*Exploratory Factor Analysis of Integrated Formational Survey*

The researcher ran an exploratory factor analysis in order to determine whether the variables associated with the IFS would combine to form a multi-item scale measuring spirituality and if this scaled construct had more than one dimension. All completed pre-test persons (N=88) were used to explore the potential dimensions of the IFS. Initially, the researcher contended that there were three dimensions. However, the factor analysis indicated that there were only two dimensions. Table 5.2 indicates results of the factor analysis showing a two-factor solution because eigenvalues were greater than 1 for Factors 1 and 2. The relevant factors are shown in bold. Also, the scree plot in Figure 5.1 shows this as the line levels out after the two main factors.<sup>250</sup>

Table 5.2 Factor analysis and Eigen values

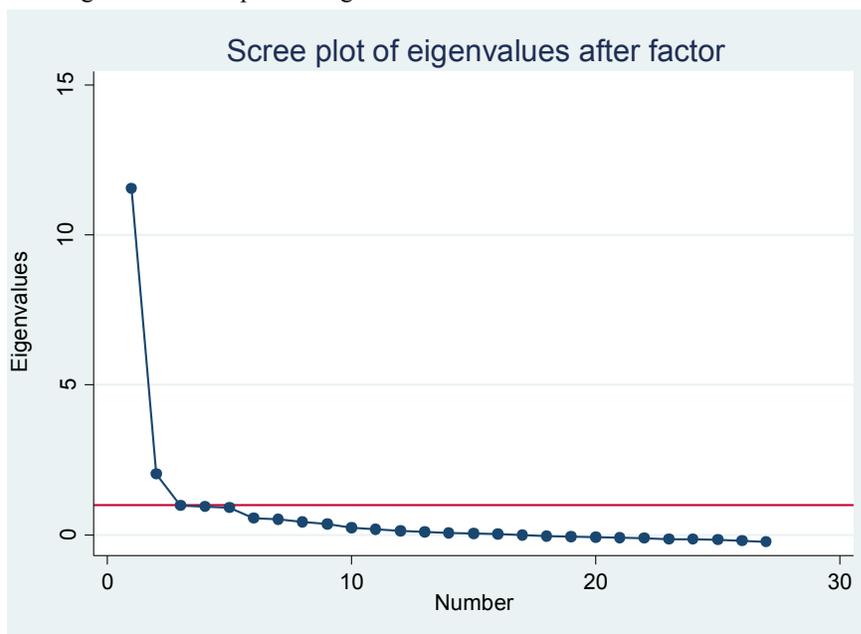
Factor	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative
<b>Factor1</b>	<b>11.54024</b>	<b>9.51860</b>	<b>0.6506</b>	<b>0.6506</b>
<b>Factor2</b>	<b>2.02164</b>	<b>1.04538</b>	<b>0.1140</b>	<b>0.7646</b>
Factor3	0.97626	0.03620	0.0550	0.8196
Factor4	0.94006	0.03924	0.0530	0.8726
Factor5	0.90082	0.34718	0.0508	0.9234
Factor6	0.55364	0.03030	0.0312	0.9546
Factor7	0.52334	0.09507	0.0295	0.9841
Factor8	0.42827	0.06832	0.0241	1.0083
Factor9	0.35995	0.12386	0.0203	1.0286
Factor10	0.23609	0.04471	0.0133	1.0419
Factor11	0.19138	0.06531	0.0108	1.0527
Factor12	0.12607	0.02590	0.0071	1.0598
Factor13	0.10017	0.03142	0.0056	1.0654
Factor14	0.06875	0.01757	0.0039	1.0693
Factor15	0.05119	0.02406	0.0029	1.0722
Factor16	0.02713	0.03228	0.0015	1.0737
Factor17	-0.00515	0.04317	-0.0003	1.0734
Factor18	-0.04832	0.01217	-0.0027	1.0707
Factor19	-0.06049	0.01976	-0.0034	1.0673
Factor20	-0.08025	0.02180	-0.0045	1.0628
Factor21	-0.10205	0.01683	-0.0058	1.0570
Factor22	-0.11888	0.02528	-0.0067	1.0503
Factor23	-0.14416	0.00936	-0.0081	1.0422
Factor24	-0.15352	0.01189	-0.0087	1.0335
Factor25	-0.16542	0.02927	-0.0093	1.0242
Factor26	-0.19468	0.03969	-0.0110	1.0132
Factor27	-0.23437	.	-0.0132	1.0000

<sup>250</sup> John Anderson, interview by researcher, Harrisburg, PA, October 30, 2014. See also, Lawrence C. Hamilton, *Regression with Graphics: A Second Course in Applied Statistics* (Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1992).

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Factor analysis/correlation                      Number of obs = 88  
Method: principal factors                      Retained factors = 16  
Rotation: (unrotated)                      Number of params = 312  
LR test: independent vs. saturated:  $\chi^2(351) = 1561.83$  Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.0000$

Figure 5.1 Scree plot of Eigen values



The latent variables generated from this project did not correlate with each other. In order to arrive at an understanding of the latent variables based on the two-factor solution, the factor analysis results were orthogonally rotated.<sup>251</sup> Table 5.3 displays the factor loadings relative to each of the survey items. The individual variables that measure spirituality are the questions in the IFS, which relate to the two factors, or latent variables, of inward condition and outward expression. The bolded loadings point to the latent variables. The questions from the IFS lead to the meaning of those variables. The

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<sup>251</sup>According to John Anderson, Doctoral Coordinator of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, the orthogonal rotation is used because it is the most straight forward in terms of its ability to create patterns that are unique, that is, it uncovers factors that are not correlated with each other and therefore the latent variables identified via this method are each assumed to be unique. Because they are unique it is possible to safely run two models: one to test inward condition of spirituality and one to test outward expression of spirituality. Inward and outward are distinctly different constructs, yet they also exist as unique dimensions of a larger idea of measured spirituality. The factor analysis with orthogonal rotation allows the researcher to soundly arrive at these conclusions and to parse out the data in a way that can test hypothesis and explore relationships.

factors, featured in bold face, were named F1: Inward Condition; and F2: Outward Expression.

Table 5.3 Rotated factor loadings (pattern matrix) and unique variances

Variable	Factor 1 Inner Condition	Factor 2 Outward Expression	I Indications
Love	0.4197	<b>0.4310</b>	Self-centered to Others-centered
	0.4024	<b>0.5242</b>	Selfish to Generous
	0.3174	<b>0.5138</b>	Uncaring to Caring
Joy	<b>0.7025</b>	0.2422	Dissatisfied to Satisfied
	<b>0.7416</b>	0.1719	Gloomy to Glad
	<b>0.7177</b>	0.1454	Defeated to Triumphant
Peace	<b>0.7253</b>	0.2487	Restless to At Rest
	<b>0.8472</b>	0.1485	Insecure to Secure
	<b>0.8713</b>	0.1856	Unsure to Confident
Patience	<b>0.5030</b>	0.4717	Impatient to Patient
	<b>0.6781</b>	0.4006	Reactive to Steady
	<b>0.4855</b>	0.3670	Intolerant to Tolerant
Kindness	0.2152	<b>0.7699</b>	Unkind to Kind
	0.1866	<b>0.7717</b>	Harsh to Mild
	0.2768	<b>0.6998</b>	Inconsiderate to Considerate
Goodness	0.2255	<b>0.5913</b>	Unethical to Ethical
	0.2596	<b>0.5383</b>	Uncharitable to Charitable
	0.4397	<b>0.4916</b>	Ungodly to Godly
Faithfulness	<b>0.7527</b>	0.2486	Fearful to Trusting
	<b>0.4900</b>	0.3893	Unreliable to Reliable
	0.1962	<b>0.6098</b>	Dishonest to Honest
Gentleness	0.2523	<b>0.6808</b>	Insensitive to Gentle

	0.3697	<b>0.6066</b>	Non-receptive to Teachable
	0.2125	<b>0.5935</b>	Proud to Humble
Self-control	0.3459	<b>0.4255</b>	Undisciplined to Disciplined
	<b>0.5374</b>	0.4477	Volatile to Calm
	<b>0.5120</b>	0.4508	Bound to Free

Both of these refer to the character and peace of Christ being formed in the lives of believers. Initially the researcher designated three factors based on a theological observation of Galatians 5:22-23. The factors were upward growth toward God, outward growth toward other people, and inward growth toward self. The factor analysis has helped to redefine these to Inward Condition and Outward Expression.

*Reliability of the IFS (Inward Condition and Outward Expression)*

The researcher tested the reliability of the multi-item scales. This means that for each scale, each item relates to each item because they are all measuring the same latent variable. In order to do this, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which measures internal consistency was used.<sup>252</sup> The Inward Condition scale has an alpha of .93 and the Outward Expression scale has an alpha of .91. These are significant indications of reliability according to Nunnally and Bernstein.<sup>253</sup> The reliability of the IFS will be further discussed in Chapter Six as to the usefulness of the IFS as a tool for ongoing spiritual formation in the lives of those wishing to ascertain their personal progress in the journey. This will allow the individual to tailor their spiritual practice toward growth.

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<sup>252</sup> John Anderson, interview by researcher, Harrisburg, PA, October 30, 2014. See also, Hamilton.

<sup>253</sup> John Anderson, interview by researcher, Harrisburg, PA, October 30, 2014. See also, J.C. Nunnally and I. H. Bernstein, *Psychometric Theory*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994).

### Imputation & Multi-Scale Generation

Eight of the surveys had incomplete values within the scales. To address this issue the researcher calculated the means of individual respondents' Spirit scores for pretest missing values and then for posttest missing values and imputed these means for the missing values. The researcher then summed across all Spirit questions for each respondent to create a Spirit-0 (Spirit score for pretest) and a Spirit-1 (Spirit score for posttest). The researcher believed this approach to be valid based on the extremely high alpha coefficients noted above (i.e., .93 and .91). Once the values were imputed by this method, summing their respective survey items for each respondent generated the Inward Condition and Outward Expression scales.

Multi-item scales were generated both for the pretest and for the posttest responses. Then individual change scores were generated to determine the differences that existed between the two testing periods. Figures 5.2 and 5.3 depict the distributions associated with these change score scales. Both distributions were relatively symmetrical in shape. These change scores served as the dependent variables in this study. See the figures below for the distributions of the changed scores below. The first figure is the inward condition and the second is the outward expression.

Figure 5.2 Inward condition change

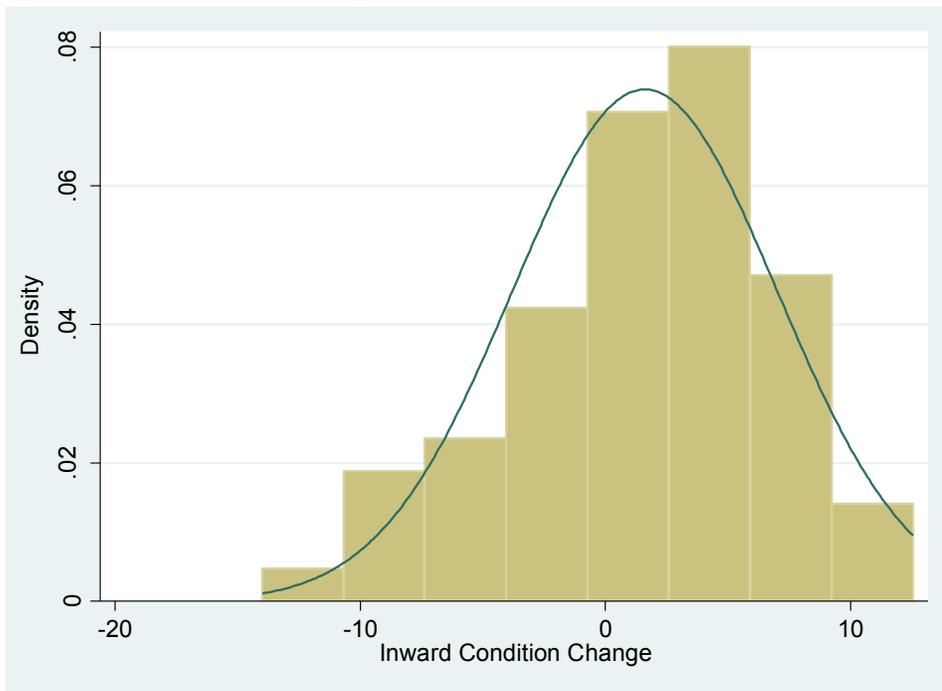
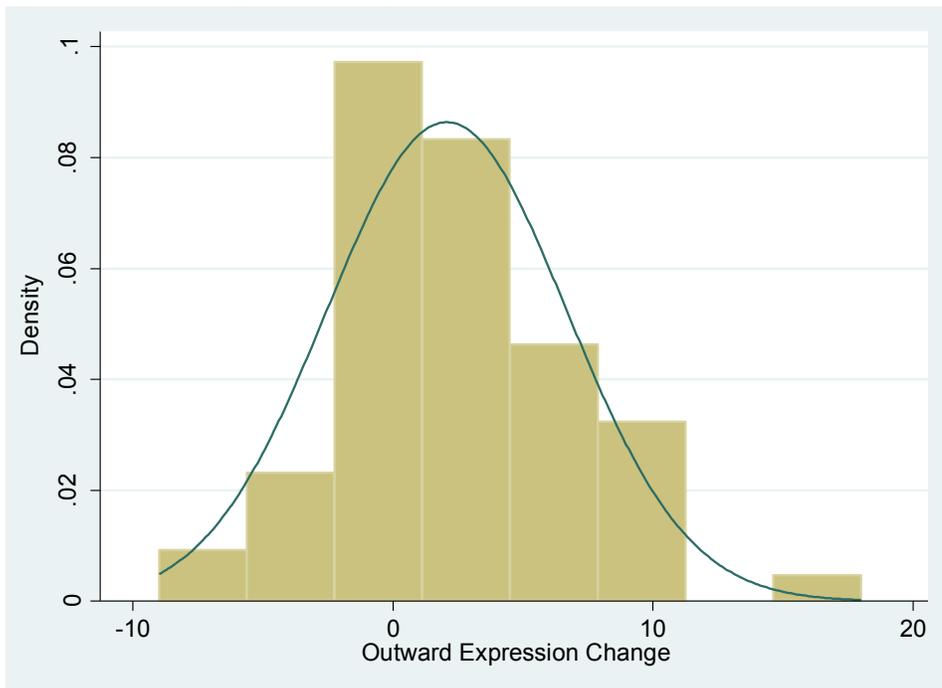


Figure 5.3 Outward expression change



## Independent Variables

Some of the independent variables had categories with very thin cells, meaning there were very few responses for that category. This made exploring relationships difficult and at times impossible. To address this problem some of the independent variables were re-categorized into less categories, thereby generating independent variables with more reasonable number of responses per category. Below the researcher shows the initial categorical distribution of responses for each independent variable and then the categories and response distribution for the transformed variable.

### *Treatment*

The treatment variable was coded as a zero/one dummy variable where one is the treatment group and zero is the control group as noted in Table 5.4. The treatment group received the devotional practice. The control group was asked to follow their normal spiritual devotional practice.

Table 5.4 Treatment and control groups

<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Control Group = 0	40	62.50
Treatment Group = 1	24	37.50

### *Devotion*

Devotion was initially measured using three categories. However, as noted in Table 5.5, the third category (i.e., None) had very few responses. A new variable was created that included only two categories: not participating in daily devotions (coded as zero) and participates in daily devotions (coded as one). Only a few persons changed their level of devotion from the pretest to the posttest. Some went up and some went

down, but no discernable pattern was observed. The researcher therefore chose to use the level of devotion that the person noted at the pretest time period as seen in Table 5.6.

Table 5.5 Initial level of devotion

<b>Devotion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Daily	39	60.94
Occasional	22	95.31
None	3	4.69

Table 5.6 Posttest level of devotion

<b>Devotion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	25	39.06
Yes	39	60.94

### *Age*

Age was initially measured using seven categories. However, as noted in Table 5.7, five of the categories had relatively few responses. A new variable was created that included only four categories combining the lower and upper end categories as shown in Table 5.8.

Table 5.7 Pretest age brackets

<b>Age Bracket</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
18 to 24	2	3.13
25 to 34	2	3.13
35 to 44	5	7.81
45 to 54	28	43.75
55 to 64	17	26.36
65 to 74	9	14.06
75 or older	1	1.56

Table 5.8 Posttest age brackets

<b>Age Bracket</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<35 to 44	9	14.06
45 to 54	28	43.75
55 to 64	17	26.36
65+	10	15.63

### *Marital Status*

Marital status was originally noted using five categories. However, as noted in Table 5.9, four of the categories had relatively few responses. A new variable was created having only two responses as shown in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 Pretest marital status

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Married	50	78.13
Widowed	2	3.13
Divorced	5	7.81
Separated	1	1.56
Single	6	9.38

Table 5.10 Posttest marital status

<b>Married</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	14	21.88
Yes	50	78.13

### *Education*

The level of education attained by the respondents was originally described in four levels as seen in Table 5.11. However, due to the relatively low frequency of individuals in the post graduate level, the adjusted variable included only three categories.

Table 5.11 Pretest level of education

<b>Education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
High School	17	26.56
College	24	37.50
Graduate	16	25.00
Post Graduate	7	10.94

Table 5.12 Posttest level of education

<b>Education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
High School	17	26.56
College	24	37.50
Masters	23	35.39

### *Denomination*

The researcher originally described denominational affiliation in six categories as seen in Table 5.13. However, due to few in the “Catholic” and “Other” categories, those two categories were combined. Though a few persons changed denominational affiliation during the test period, they fell within the metrics described in the revised table.

Table 5.13 Pretest denomination

<b>Denomination</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Catholic	1	1.56
Mainline	12	18.75
Evangelical	19	29.69
Charismatic	16	25.00
Independent	13	20.31
Other	3	4.69

Table 5.14 Posttest denomination

<b>Denomination</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Mainline	12	18.75
Evangelical	19	23.69
Charismatic	16	25.00
Independent	13	20.31
Other	4	6.25

### *Employment*

Employment status was described in the original variables in six categories as seen in Table 5.15. However, the categories were reduced four in the revised table as seen in Table 5.16.

Table 5.15 Pretest employment status

<b>Employment</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Professional	26	40.63
Salaried	8	12.50
Hourly	10	15.63
Home w/children	6	9.38
Home wo/children	7	10.94
Unemployed	7	10.94

Table 5.16 Posttest employment status

<b>Employment</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Professional	26	40.63
Salaried	8	12.50
Hourly	10	15.63
Not Working	20	31.25

### Multivariate Analyses

In the analysis of the variables in the post research period, the researcher ran multiple regressions for each of the dependent variables on the independent variables as described above. To address this problem some of the independent variables were re-categorized into less categories, thereby generating independent variables with more reasonable number of responses per category. After running the initial Ordinary Least Squares Regressions, the models were critiqued to determine how well they met the underlying mathematical assumptions. Where necessary, a final statistical model was chosen to address deviations from these assumptions. The results were then highlighted.

#### *Regression of Inward Condition Change Scores*

To determine if a significant difference existed between the treatment and control groups relative to Inward Condition, the researcher regressed Inward Condition Change on the seven defined independent variables. Exploratory graphs were run to assess the mathematical assumptions for this model and found some distortion from the normal independent identically distributed error assumption (normal interdependent identically distributed errors).<sup>254</sup> However, it was found that the tolerances ran from .86 to .96 indicating that multicollinearity did not exist. Nonetheless, based on the deviation from

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<sup>254</sup> John Anderson, interview by researcher, October 30, 2014, Harrisburg, PA. See also, Hamilton.

normal independent identically distributed error assumption noted above, the researcher used a regression with robust standard errors (i.e., the use of the Huber-White Sandwich Estimator), which will address such concerns.<sup>255</sup>

The table below presents results from the correct model for the Inward Condition Change scores. The confidence level for significance was set at 95% which relates to a P-value  $\leq .05$ . In this model, based on the insignificant F value (P=0.169), nothing was found significant, which suggests that irrespective of the other independent variables, no difference existed between the treatment and control groups relative to Inward Condition.

Table 5.17 Regression inward condition scores

Statistical Description	Results
Number of obs	64
F( 15, 48)	1.44
Prob > F	0.1690
R-squared	0.3110
Root MSE	5.1327

#### *Regression of Outward Expression Change Scores*

To determine if a significant difference existed between the treatment and control groups relative to Outward Expression, the researcher regressed Outward Expression Change on the seven defined independent variables then ran exploratory graphs to assess the mathematical assumptions for this model.<sup>256</sup> The researcher found some distortion from the normal independent identical distributed error assumption (normal interdependent identically distributed errors). However, as noted previously, the tolerances ran from .86 to .96 indicating that multicollinearity did not exist. Nonetheless, based on the deviation from normal independent identical distributed error assumption

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<sup>255</sup> John Anderson, interview by researcher, Harrisburg, PA, October 30, 2014.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

noted above, the researcher used the Huber-White Sandwich Estimator), which will address such concerns.<sup>257</sup>

Table 5.18 presents the correct model for the Outward Expression Change scores with the Huber-White Sandwich Estimation. The confidence level for significance was set at 95%, which relates to a P-value  $\leq .05$ . In this model, due to the insignificant F value (P=0.110), nothing was found significant, which suggests that irrespective of the other independent variables, no difference exists between the treatment and control groups with respect to Outward Expression. In spite of this finding, the P-value for the F statistic was relatively close to the .10 level of significance (90% confidence level). Given the small sample size, which increases the difficulty of rejecting the null hypothesis, it seems reasonable to address probable effects nearer to the 90% level of significance.

From this perspective it appears that married persons scored significantly higher on the Outward Expression Change Scale than non-married persons irrespective of the other variables (see Figure 5.3). Similarly, the joint effect for employment category was significant at the 95% confidence level and a multiple comparison of categories indicates that, all things being equal, persons who worked hourly jobs scored significantly higher on the Outward Expression Change Scale than persons in other employment categories such as professional or salaried individuals. (See Figure 5.4).

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<sup>257</sup> John Anderson, interview by researcher, October 31, 2014, Harrisburg, PA.

Table 5.18 Regression of outward expression change scores on independent variables

outward_chng	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
1.treatment	-.4657452	1.136231	-0.41	0.684	-2.750291	1.8188
daily_devo0						
Yes	-.0196349	1.397387	-0.01	0.989	-2.829269	2.789999
age_cat4						
45 to 54	-2.928711	1.907382	-1.54	0.131	-6.763759	.9063382
55 to 64	-.9258836	2.025991	-0.46	0.650	-4.999412	3.147645
65+	-2.173542	2.241063	-0.97	0.337	-6.679501	2.332418
married						
Yes	4.087493	1.519276	2.69	0.010	1.032784	7.142203
educ_cat3						
College	.714758	1.415286	0.51	0.616	-2.130865	3.56038
Masters	.0959214	1.621978	0.06	0.953	-3.165285	3.357127
denom0_cat5						
Evangelical	-2.142691	1.865893	-1.15	0.257	-5.894319	1.608937
Charismatic	-1.333246	1.636133	-0.81	0.419	-4.622913	1.956421
Independent	-4.335386	1.833728	-2.36	0.022	-8.022343	-.6484276
Other	-1.297612	3.599224	-0.36	0.720	-8.534337	5.939112
employ0_cat4						
Salary	1.461895	1.872196	0.78	0.439	-2.302408	5.226198
Hourly	4.881546	2.347419	2.08	0.043	.1617439	9.601349
Not Working	-1.35257	1.115871	-1.21	0.231	-3.59618	.8910399
_cons	2.034746	2.918595	0.70	0.489	-3.833484	7.902975

Number of obs = 64

F( 15, 48) = 1.60  
 Prob > F = 0.1105  
 R-squared = 0.2687  
 Root MSE = 4.5248

Figure 5.4 Growth and marital status

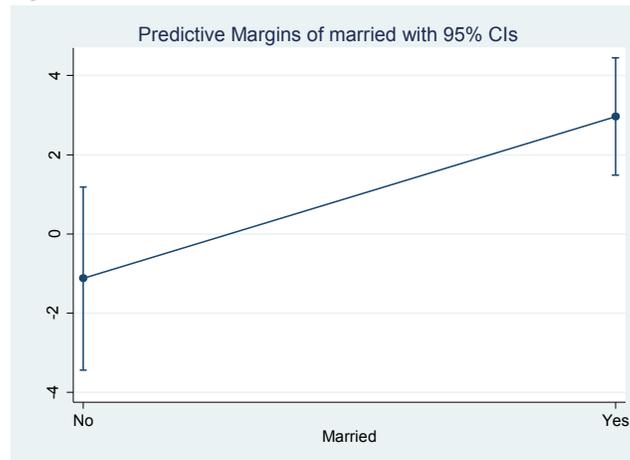
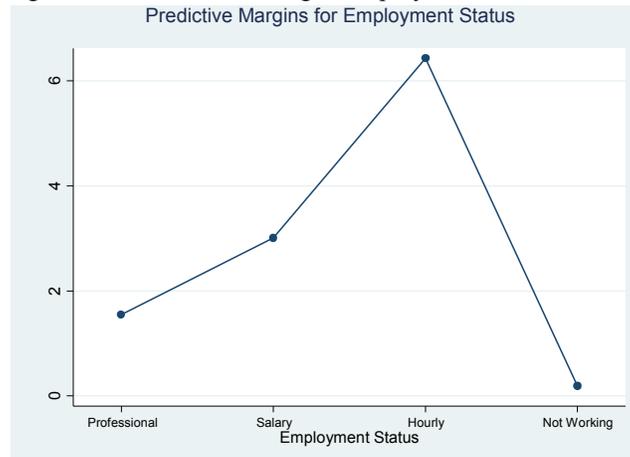


Figure 5.5 Growth according to employment status



### Hawthorne Effect

As noted above, there was little measurable difference between the control and treatment groups in the project. This could possibly be due to the Hawthorne Effect. The Hawthorne Effect describes the fact that there may be change in a control group simply because of the focus or attention on the subjects. Earl Babbie uses the example of a study of employee satisfaction in the wiring room of a telephone company where lighting conditions were improved through increased lighting. The researchers found that

when they again decreased the lighting, production still improved. The improvement was then estimated to the result of the attention given to the employees.<sup>258</sup>

In the case of this project, the Hawthorne Effect may be responsible for the fact that those in the control and experimental groups grew at a similar rate because they were part of the research project which in and of itself may have motivated growth and focus on their subject's spiritual devotional practice. The researcher will integrate the resulting conclusions from this in Chapter Six.

### **Qualitative Survey**

#### Data Collection & Response

The following qualitative interview guide was sent by e-mail to thirty-three randomly selected individuals from both the control and experimental groups. The identity of all respondents was confidential. Their names do not appear anywhere in the surveys. They are identified only by email address. There were six respondents, a response rate of eighteen percent. There were five respondents from the experimental group and one from the control group. They were invited to participate in the qualitative survey by filling in a Word document and returning it by e-mail or by means of a telephone interview. Five respondents chose to participate by e-mail and one by telephone interview. The following Post-Research Qualitative Interview Guide was sent to them. (See Appendix D)

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<sup>258</sup> Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, 5th ed. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1989), 216-217.

## Thematic Exploration

As the responses to the ten survey questions were examined, four themes emerged: personal experience, sharing, change, and challenges.

### *Personal Experience*

The personal experiences of the respondents were mostly positive during the devotional period, ranging from comments on the devotional model itself to the level of transformation experienced during the forty-day devotional period. Personal experience was also further delineated into subthemes of awareness of God's presence and personal response.

### Awareness of God's Presence

Respondents commented on personal experiences, more personal connection with God and of sensing the personal presence of God. Respondents commenting on their personal experience responded with remarks such as, "I had an acute sense of the presence of God" and "God revealed himself in such personal ways."<sup>259</sup> Another respondent said that he or she had, "Much more awareness of God's blessings and protection than when not doing the devotional study."<sup>260</sup>

### Personal Response

Of those who did the devotional, four of the six found the restoring prayer at the end of the devotional helpful and used it several times. The restorative prayer was seen as very personal for those who used it. The restoring prayer helped them to go deeper to

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<sup>259</sup> Qualitative respondent 6.

<sup>260</sup> Quantitative respondent 4.

connect with God on a more personal level. One respondent commented that an increased awareness of God's personal presence made the devotional more personal.<sup>261</sup> A personal awareness resulted necessitated and personal response to that presence. This personal awareness and response led one respondent to comment that, "(God) had been involved in every moment of my life."<sup>262</sup>

### *Sharing*

The theme of sharing had two subthemes of sharing with spouses and sharing with others.

#### Sharing with Spouses

Five out of the six commented that they shared the devotional in some manner with friends and/or their spouses. Some respondents shared the devotional experience with their spouses finding help for their marriages through the insights they gained. When asked whether they shared the devotional in any way with their spouse one individual affirmed that the forty-day devotional journey had an effect on their spiritual life together. Another who shared with their spouse commented that they "liked the format" of the devotional journey.<sup>263</sup> The question was not asked whether the respondents had any kind of regular devotional practice with spouses. One respondent volunteered they did have a regular devotional time with their spouse though the nature of that was not stated. In all there was an increase in sharing revelation and growth with spouses.

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<sup>261</sup> Qualitative respondent 6.

<sup>262</sup> Qualitative respondent 4.

<sup>263</sup> Qualitative respondent 5.

### Sharing with Others

One of the respondents said he or she would recommend this devotional format for others who are “coming out of bondages.”<sup>264</sup> This was in a ministry setting where the devotional was used as a tool for healing and restoration. One individual shared the devotion with two couples as well as her spouse. Insights gained from the devotional were shared with individuals along the way of the journey as they applied to life situations that arose. Another respondent commented that sharing was “more through observation of the strength gained as a result of the devotional journey.”<sup>265</sup>

### *Change*

Change was experienced in two subthemes: Growth and transformation and devotional practice represented in the IFD.

### Growth and Transformation

Transformation and change occurred during the course of the forty-day devotional period for most of the qualitative respondents. Some described this growth as a time of drawing closer to God and “awareness of his presence and protection during the devotional study.”<sup>266</sup> One respondent commented on a change in her connection with God saying that the integrated devotional, “deepened my connection to the Father's heart and drastically transformed my opinion of how God feels about me”<sup>267</sup> Similarly a

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<sup>264</sup> Qualitative respondent 1.

<sup>265</sup> Qualitative respondent 4.

<sup>266</sup> Qualitative respondent 4.

<sup>267</sup> Qualitative respondent 6.

respondent commented on the sense of God's presence saying he or she, "Drew closer to God and felt more thankful for Him walking alongside me."<sup>268</sup>

### Devotional Practice

One respondent wrote they wanted to, "[C]ontinue the method of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming because of the encouragement Scripture was to me when examined in this intentional way."<sup>269</sup> Respondents that used the devotional model of meditation found a progressive revelation of God through the process as well as some more permanent adjustments to the devotional lives. The experience of the devotional was also a "transforming experience"<sup>270</sup> which led to incorporating the principles of the model into their daily practice after they finished the forty-day devotional. The individual who did not go through the devotional also acknowledged the "river of God's presence" during the focused research period. Another respondent commented, "God revealed how intimately He has been involved in every moment of my life." A similar comment was that they wanted to "continue the method of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming because of the encouragement Scripture was to me when examined in this intentional way."<sup>271</sup> One respondent commented that the simplicity of the devotional format "made it easy to focus" and provided a deeper experience of the presence and voice of God."<sup>272</sup> This same respondent mentioned the word simple three times. The simplicity of the

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<sup>268</sup> Qualitative respondent 4.

<sup>269</sup> Qualitative respondent 4.

<sup>270</sup> Qualitative respondent 5.

<sup>271</sup> Qualitative respondent 6.

<sup>272</sup> Qualitative respondent 5.

format then is a factor in growth and transformation. The practice of using visualizing was not familiar to all of those who entered the study. The practice had the effect of deepening personal awareness of the personal and interactive presence of God to the respondents.

### Personal Response

The forty days of focusing was helpful to respondents of both the experimental and control groups. One individual who did not do the devotion commented that being a part of the project was continuations of the “trajectory of growth” participants were already on.

### *Challenges*

There were a few challenges mentioned by those who returned qualitative questionnaires. Those challenges were noted in subthemes of time, distractions, and consistency.

### Time

For some of the respondents, the integrated devotional took more time than they were used to for a devotional resulting in at least one individual dropping out half way through the devotion. This is only speculation. Other possible interpretations are presented in Chapter Six of this project. Time is often a factor in Western Spirituality. This may also have contributed to a large number of individuals not completing the devotional in the experimental group and not responding to the posttest collector. This same individual did, however, find that the devotional helped to focus on the Lord each morning.

## Distractions

One respondent felt some level of “spiritual distraction” during this time. It was unclear from the response what was meant by spiritual distraction but it seemed that he or she was communicating spiritual opposition. In a similar vein another respondent said, “It seemed as if Satan always put distractions there so it wasn’t always easy to find time.”<sup>273</sup> Becoming quiet and focused was mentioned as a distraction as though becoming quiet was not a usual practice or value. One respondent wrote that, “It was a challenge to get quiet.” The quieting dimension of the devotion was a foreign concept to some. One respondent compared the integrated devotion to their normal routine finding that he or she had previously not spent time quieting or listening. “I usually read a devotional and its accompanying Scripture, but don’t always spend a lot of time quieting and listening.”<sup>274</sup>

## Consistency

Another challenge was related challenge was the self-discipline of doing the study on a daily basis. To remain consistent in the routine of the forty-day devotional was a challenge. One respondent felt the need to go back and “catch up” with the devotional.<sup>275</sup> This lack of consistency may not be in the fact of having a daily or regular devotion but more in the reality of the depth of the devotion.

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<sup>273</sup> Qualitative respondent 4.

<sup>274</sup> Qualitative respondent 4.

<sup>275</sup> Qualitative respondent 1.

### Summary of Qualitative Findings

The qualitative data generated in the study compliments and explores the quantitative data in this project. The four themes emerged from the qualitative survey were: personal experience, sharing, changes, and challenges during the survey period. The respondents used key words such as: *transformation, intimacy, revelation, and presence*. Though the quantitative survey did not reveal large wholesale growth or change, the qualitative survey revealed something not measured in the IFS: a new level of intimacy with God and a sense of the personal presence of God with the respondents. The following is a table that summarizes the qualitative themes and subthemes.

Table 5.19 Summary of qualitative themes

<b>Qualitative themes</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>
Personal experience	Awareness of God's presence Response to God's presence
Sharing	Sharing with spouses Sharing with others
Change	Growth and transformation Devotional practice
Challenges	Time Distractions Consistency

### Summary

Chapter Five of this research project reported the data generated from the quantitative and qualitative surveys used by the researcher. The purpose of the project was to discover whether or not there was any difference in the spiritual growth of individuals who followed an integrated formational devotion for forty days as compared to those who followed their own normal devotional practice. The researcher investigated this question by using a quantitative survey based on the fruit of the Spirit found in

Galatian 5:22-23. Results of this investigation were discussed in detail as to the dependent and independent variables for the research project. The method of investigation, the IFS, was validated and found reliable as a measure of spirituality. Invitations were sent to thirty-three individuals from the experimental or control groups to discuss their experiences during the forty-day devotional journey. Four themes emerged from those respondents: personal experience, sharing, change, and challenges.

In Chapter Six of this project, the researcher will summarize the research project, draw conclusions from the findings, and make recommendations for further research into the integrated spiritual formation of believers. The researcher will also adjust the definition of integrated spiritual formation based upon the results of this project and will put forward an introductory work on integrated spiritual formation titled, *Everything That Grows*.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Thom Gardner, *Everything that Grows, Finding Your Spiritual Rhythm of Life in Christ* (North Charleston, SC: Create Space, 2014).

CHAPTER SIX  
SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Project Summary**

The Problem Statement

This project began by identifying a collective misconception in the body of Christ regarding the nature and definition of spiritual formation. Spiritual formation as defined in this project is the believer's journey toward the character and peace of Christ through spiritual practice. The problem stated at the beginning of this project was that many believers view spiritual formation as set of practices and behaviors. It was and is the belief of the researcher that intimacy with God causes inner transformation, resulting in outward expressions in behavior toward people. A Barna study highlighted this understanding of spiritual formation. The study reported, "One of the widely embraced notions about spiritual health is that it means 'trying hard to follow the rules described in the Bible.'—81 % of self-identified Christians endorsed this statement, and a majority agreed strongly (53%)."<sup>277</sup> Dallas Willard touches on the inability of formational disciplines alone to transform believers: "The realities of

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<sup>277</sup> The Barna Group, "Many Churchgoers and Faith Leaders Struggle to Define Spiritual Maturity," <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/12-faithspirituality/264-many-churchgoers-and-faith-leaders-struggle-to-define-spiritual-maturity?q=define+spiritual+maturity> [accessed October 12, 2011].

Christian spiritual formation are that we will not be transformed ‘into his likeness’ by more information, or by infusions, inspirations, or ministrations alone.”<sup>278</sup>

The goal of spiritual formation is to know and love God, resulting in behavioral change. Personal knowledge of God is a key to our formation and growth, not merely knowing and following rules. The Scriptures reflect this order of knowing preceding behavior. "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments ... And again, Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.”<sup>279</sup> Consider the epistle of First John where the writer says, “By this we know that we are the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.”<sup>280</sup> Loving God completely, the greatest of all commandments,<sup>281</sup> requires an unobstructed view of God. Issues that require healing and transformation often cloud this clear and unobstructed view of God. It is the contention of the researcher that unhealed areas in the hearts of believers form a veil, an obstruction between the faces of the believer and the face of God—a false concept of God implanted through past wounding or programming interpreted through emotional pain. These obstructions can be the result of childhood wounding or dysfunctional family systems. They may be cultural or ethnic aspects that form personal, implicit beliefs. To live in the personal presence of God with nothing between the face of the believer and his is the goal of an integrated model of spiritual formation.

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<sup>278</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Rediscovering the Essential Teachings of Jesus on Discipleship* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 76.

<sup>279</sup> Jn 14:15, 23-24 [NASB].

<sup>280</sup> 1 Jn 5:2-3 [NASB].

<sup>281</sup> Mat 22:27 [NASB].

Growth and transformation toward the peace and character of Christ come through intimacy with God, not mere behavioral change.

The integrated model of spiritual formation identified in this project followed a formational continuum consisting of four dimensions of spiritual practices: quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming. The novelty in this model was the inclusion of intentional restoring practices that included formational or restoring prayer viewed as a normative practice for all believers. That restorative aspect happens in the personal presence of God as followers of Christ seek to find and heal obstacles to intimacy with God. The goals and practices of the continuum are seen below in Table 1.1.

Table 6.1 Practices and goals of the formational continuum

<b>Spiritual practice</b>	<b>Believer's goal</b>
Quieting	Be present to Christ
Listening	Respond to Christ
Restoring	Remove obstacles
Becoming	Christ-centered living

### Research Questions Guiding the Research

This was a mixed methods research study that addressed three research questions:

1. What are the elements underlie a viable model for integrated spiritual formation?
2. How does an integrated model of spiritual formation including practices of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming affect the spiritual growth of believers?
3. Can a valid and reliable measure of growth toward the character and peace of Christ be developed?

### Assumptions and Limitations in the Research Project

1. A chief assumption was that those participating in the project desire a deeper and transformational experience through personal spirituality. The study would be limited to those who professed a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ to whatever extent that can be described and determined.
2. The limitations of this study consisted of the short duration of the study as to whether the subjects or participants experience lasting peace. A further limitation was that much of the results were based upon self-disclosure of the participants subject to other factors not addressed in this study. Further limitations were discovered upon completion of the project that will be discussed later in this chapter under the heading, "Post-Research Limitations of the Project."

### Hypothesis

The underlying research question investigated in this project asks: What effect does an integrated model of spiritual formation, which includes facets of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming, have in leading believers toward the peace and character of Christ? This question led to the generalized hypothesis that believers who practice an integrated model of spiritual formation will grow in the peace and character of Christ.

It was the contention of the researcher that through the use of an integrated model of spiritual formation, those participating in the treatment group for this project will demonstrate growth in the peace and character of Jesus Christ. That growth would be observed in three facets: upward growth toward God, outward growth toward other people, and inward growth toward self. These variables were described in Chapter Four.

## Design of the Research

Quantitative and qualitative surveys developed by the researcher measured the respondent's movement toward the peace and character of Christ. The quantitative survey was implemented through SurveyMonkey and the qualitative survey consisted of a Microsoft Word document sent out to selected respondents. (See Appendices in Chapter Four of this project.) The integrated model for spiritual formation included an inductive restorative prayer feature as a normative part of the believer's spiritual formation toward the peace and character of Christ.

The researcher developed an integrated model for spiritual formation including dimensions of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming to lead believers toward the peace and character of Christ based in the witness of Scripture, church history, and a review of current approaches to both Christian ministry and formational practice. The researcher designed and tested the integrated model of spiritual formation and used a mixed methods approach with a treatment group and a control group, each of which were surveyed using the Integrated Formational Survey (IFS) based on the fruit of the Spirit as referenced in Galatians 5:22-23. Respondents to the survey were pre and posttested using the IFS.

## Project Findings

In this section the researcher will discuss the findings from the research. This includes the data from both the quantitative and qualitative tools, the factor analysis, and significant findings from the data relative to marriage and employment.

### Factor Analysis

The findings in the factor analysis in Chapter Five indicated also that there were not three facets of spiritual growth but two. The assumed three factors were upward growth toward God, outward growth toward other people, and inward growth toward self. While these are valid ways to look at spiritual growth based upon Galatian 5:22-23 and the fruit of the Spirit, the factor analysis and subsequent assessment of internal constancy among the scaled items revealed two valid and reliable factors: inward condition of the believer, and the outward expression of that condition (see table 5.3 in Chapter Five).

The delineation of these factors reinforces the researcher's belief that intimacy with God causes inner transformation, resulting in outward expressions in behavior toward people. Christian behavior flows from intimacy more than intimacy flows from adherence to behavioral rules. The two factors revealed in the analysis also reinforce the primacy of intimacy in that the inner condition leads to outward behavior.

Jesus reinforced the primacy of intimacy as he chose and lived with his disciples.

Note the priority of being with Jesus:

And He went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons.<sup>282</sup>

The disciples were first *with* Jesus before they were sent out to preach and have authority for ministry. Preaching and authority were simply the overflow of first being *with* Jesus.

There were two small subgroups mentioned in that did experience spiritual growth: those who were hourly employees versus salaried or professionals, and those

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<sup>282</sup> Mk 3:13-16 [NASB].

who were married versus those who were not married. Whether or not they were in the treatment or control group did not make a difference. The reason for this growth in these subgroups is speculative and requires further investigation. It could be observed that those in the hourly employment group were more accustomed to a regular routine in their work lives and therefore approach devotional time with more regularity. Marriage may also be a regulating or stabilizing influence in the spiritual lives of some believers leading to more regular spiritual practice. Again, both of these explanations, while seemingly reasonable, remain speculative requiring further inquiry.

### Limitations of the Project

#### *Inconclusive Quantitative Data*

The result of the pre and posttesting of respondents in both the treatment group and the control group in the quantitative portion of this project found no significant difference in spiritual growth between the groups. This may be so because the population of respondents for this project all came from a limited pool. The participants were those already pursuing spiritual growth in greater depth.

#### *Limited Size of the Sample*

The sample for this project was relatively small, consisting of ninety-two respondents who were equally divided into the treatment and control groups with forty-six in each group. Of those in the treatment group, forty-seven percent did not respond to the post-test invitation reducing further the size of those in the treatment group. As the researcher gathered the qualitative interviews, there were a few mentions of the length of

the integrated devotional or treatment. The intensity and length of the treatment may have influenced the high number of those dropping of discontinuing the treatment.

#### *Limited Diversity of the Sample*

Variability of the sample in this project was also a limitation. Many of the profiles were 70% or more the same. In addition, more than 70% were between ages of 45-64; 98% had some regular pattern of devotions; 78% were married; and 74% had either a high school or college education. Most of the respondents came from the researcher's Facebook or ministry mailing list, most of who would be highly motivated toward spiritual growth. The researcher's ministry is one that includes healing heart issues and therefore is more experiential than other approaches to spiritual formation. Those connected to the ministry of the researcher may be more focused on mystical factors such as union with Christ. In addition, the used of the Internet to collect responses and communicate with respondents created a weakness in the homogeneity of the population for this study. All of the respondents were connected to the researcher's own e-mail and social media venues. In order to measure spiritual growth there must be a greater diversity of the sample drawing from individuals at diverse steps of the spiritual journey.

#### *Lack of Community Experience*

Since this project and the model of integrated formation was inductive and more focused on the individual's growth, there was a lack of community and sharing of individual experiences. The qualitative surveys indicated that those who were married did share their personal experiences with spouses, but it was not a regular requirement of the

study. The aspect of community or shared growth experience may have affected the outcome of the project. As noted in Chapter Two of this project, it is in community that believers unbind one another. A treatment group facilitated by the researcher may have been a way to encourage a symbiotic growth. Believers grow best when they grow together. Put another way, believers unbind one another from the grave clothes just as the family and friends of Lazarus removed the bindings from the tomb.

The aspect of community leads to a further discussion of the Hawthorne effect mentioned in the previous chapter. There was little difference of the growth of respondents, whether in the treatment or control groups. Why or how could this be so? The Hawthorne effect occurs when a group senses the attention or involvement of being part of a group that results in positive change. In the case of this project, the heightened focus on spiritual growth may have led to improvement even to those who had not received any treatment. Respondents were more focused on spiritual growth, whether or not they used the researcher's integrated devotional.

In a dissertation concerning cognitive effects and spiritual development, Carlton Thomas conjectures that the Hawthorne effect invalidated some responses on a spiritual assessment inventory (SAI). The inventory was developed along a five-point Likert scale, as was the IFS in this project. In the case of Thomas' study, it was suggested that the mean score on one of his scales was affected by the Hawthorne effect when the group was responding to questions about disappointment resulting in an artificially low mean

score. (It was desirable Christian behavior not to be disappointed.) This low score was attributed to the focus of the group on the project.<sup>283</sup>

In the same way that participants in a sociological study are affected by the Hawthorne effect, community may also affect its members as they walk with one another on the formational journey in a positive way. In spiritual community the members all belong to a group focused on a particular objective of spiritual growth. There is an encouragement for the formational journey.

Modifications to the research model and methods to address these limitations will be offered later in this chapter. The recommendations address the areas of sample size and diversity as well as community dimension.

### **Project Conclusions**

What does the fact of no significant difference or growth between the treatment and control groups mean for the researcher's concept of integrated spiritual formation and the models for measuring growth toward the character and peace of Christ? There are aspects of the findings that are valuable for spiritual growth, irrespective of quantitative data generated in this study.

It is the belief of the researcher that the order of practice along the formational continuum detailed in Chapter Two of this project is valid and reasonable based on the revelations of the factor analysis and qualitative data examined later in this chapter. The formational continuum consists of practices of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming. Believers begin by *quieting* their hearts and focusing on the intimate presence

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<sup>283</sup> Charles Nolan Thomas, "Cognitive Effects and Spiritual Development: The Relationship Between Cognitive Deficits and Spiritual Development" (PhD, diss. Liberty University, 2008), 79.

of God, for the purpose of *listening* to his heart, helping in *restoring* their hearts, resulting in their hearts *becoming* like his. All of these begin in intimacy with Christ. Again, intimacy leads to transformation in the inner condition of the believer resulting in the outward expression of behavioral change. Believers are first *with* Christ. To be with Christ in the intimate relationship is the point of redemption in Christ. Believers are not only saved *by* him, but ultimately *for* him.

### Value of the Integrated Formational Survey

In Chapter Five of this project, the scale developed for measuring spirituality, the Integrated Formational Survey (IFS), was found to be a nearly 95% reliable measure of spirituality. Due to the high degree of reliability, the IFS may be used as an ongoing survey to measure the spiritual growth of believers. The IFS is a survey used to determine areas of needed spiritual growth. It allows the believer to focus their spiritual practice to grow in the character and peace of Christ. Further study must be done to coordinate areas of growth with particular principles and practices.

A simple conclusion evidenced by this project and its findings is that spiritual growth depends upon two important factors: intentionality and consistency of the believer on his or her journey toward the character and peace of Christ. This growth will come about as a result of the believer's desire to grow in intimate relationship with Christ. Growth in the character and peace of Christ are a result of intimate relationship with Christ.

In the qualitative interviews generated in this project, several individuals indicated that they employed the restorative prayer aspect of the devotional, in some cases several times. That is, there was an encounter with a biblical truth statement that

did not seem true for the individual personally. Participants were invited to seek the leading of the Holy Spirit through an inductive prayer model to reveal why those statements did not feel true for them. This involved Spirit-led prayer to reveal aspects of their own history where false or unbiblical beliefs were formed. According to some of those who responded to the qualitative survey, these sessions resulted in deeper and transformative encounters with the presence and person of Christ. Transformation did not come about as a result of attention to the words and meanings of Scripture alone, but through the personal encounter with Christ. Intimacy with Christ brought truth and healing.

#### The Value of Patience

The data accumulated through this research project revealed certain less quantifiable factors in the spiritual formation of believers. These may be noted in a further reflection of the words of Jesus cited earlier in this project as he described the growth of the kingdom of God. This may be applied as a metaphor for the formation of the hearts of individuals as the kingdom grows in and through them:

And He was saying, “The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows — how, he himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”<sup>284</sup>

As with everything that grows, time is a factor. There are seasons of growth and seasons of rest much like a wise farmer rotates and rests his fields. The Scriptures reinforce this value of rotation of rest and growth in the Torah.

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<sup>284</sup> Mk 4:26-29 [NASB].

You shall sow your land for six years and gather in its yield, but on the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the needy of your people may eat; and whatever they leave the beast of the field may eat. You are to do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove.<sup>285</sup>

Formation and growth in the realm of the Spirit seldom happens in minutes, though there may be the brilliant sunlight of revelation. Formation happens in terms of years and seasons. In order for anything to grow there must be an elapsing of time. A farmer does not plant seed and stand over it expecting it to erupt through the ground in minutes or a few days. The formation and growth of believers in the character and peace of Christ is observed over time with patience attendance the seed of the Christ life sown.

There are also life experiences that come along under the hand of God that bring revelation of the heart and character of God. These may include times of crisis that crash into believer's lives like the sudden storms that assails the crop that has been planted. Yet these times of tempest prove the character and God. These experiences may include the revelation of the heart of God through the kindness of other people in community as the fruits of the Spirit mature in them and bring forth more seeds as all fruits do.

A key phrase in the biblical description above was that growth happens, but how, "he himself does not know."<sup>286</sup> There are seasons of rapid growth where the fruit seems to develop suddenly. However, growth that seemed so rapid was aided by long seasons of cultivation. Growth in the Spirit is a mystery as much as a process. Those in the western world are not always comfortable with the mystery of God. Yet the God worshipped and served is the invisible God! Spiritual formation is a mystical process that may not be fully

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<sup>285</sup> Ex 23:10-11 [NASB].

<sup>286</sup> Mk 4:27 [NASB].

measured by quantitative means but may be observed in the life of followers of Christ in the long arc of life.

The parable says that growth happens automatically, yet the process cannot be rushed. Cultivation is necessary as believers remove obstacles to growth and protecting the crop from the wild animals that would devour the harvest. There is a constancy of effort required for seeds come to maturity to bring a harvest. There is the plowing of repentance for the soil of human hearts to receive the seed. Then there is the cultivation of the seed through spiritual practice, and the harvest of the crop, that is the reproduction of the seed that was originally sown. All of these factors require patience. No responsible farmer plants a seed then walks away only to return when the crop is ready months later. Just as spiritual formation is not merely behavioral, it is also not always predictable. It is the product of time, patience, cultivation, and ultimately the love and faithfulness of God through Christ nurtured through intimate relationship.

### **Recommendations**

It is further indicated that more study must be done and adjustments made to the research model as the results of this initial exploratory study are inconclusive. Following are the researcher's recommendations for adjustments to the research model and method.

#### **Sample Size and Diversity**

As noted above, the size and diversity of the sample may obviate more evidence of growth in the peace and character of Christ. A sample that includes individuals at the beginning of their spiritual journey may leave more room for growth. It is suggested that the IFS could be used with individuals or small groups entering a process of discipleship

or intentional spiritual growth. The IFS may be taken on a regular basis to determine areas of attention for growth. Further writing and explanation of each of the fruit of the Spirit could be made available to those in the process of spiritual formation.

### The Aspect of Community

The researcher discussed the important role of community in the formation and healing of believers in Chapter Two. Ruth Haley Barton refers to community as an important factor in healing and transformation:

It is impossible to overstate the importance of community in the spiritual transformation process. This is not the same thing as the Christian busyness that often accompanies church life; it is about quietly sharing the journey with others who are also drawn to deeper levels of spiritual transformation that enable them to discern and do God's will.<sup>287</sup>

Community may also be helpful in maintaining the motivation of the participants in small groups as they urge one another on in the spiritual formational journey. It is the observation of the researcher that believers grow better when growing together. Glenn E. Myers, writing on medieval spiritual communities of faith, described the connection of individual growth in the context of Christian community.

As believers our relationship with God must be personal, but it is not meant to be private. Christian community contributes to our Christian growth in vital ways. Community serves as the context for spiritual friendship to develop, offering a safe haven in which we are known by others and loved in the midst of our brokenness. Close believers in community model Christian character to us. Much of the Christian life is more caught than taught, and our lives can be permanently altered by watching others demonstrate godly disciplines, patient attitudes, and genuine forgiveness. Friends in community encourage us when the spiritual journey seems long and circuitous. Their encouragement, instruction and input prod us forward in Christ.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006), 15.

<sup>288</sup> Glenn E. Myers, *Seeking Spiritual Intimacy, Journeying Deeper with Medieval Women of Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 93.

The spiritual growth of believers in community offers a seedbed in which to grow and develop together. God is a relational God within his triune or perichoretic nature. Development in the character and peace of Christ also occurs in the context of relational community. Further research into integrated spiritual formation could include a communal aspect in small groups led by a facilitator, or more organic open sharing groups of three or four individuals sharing the formational journey.

As a result of this research project, the researcher has included a book that leads the reader through an approach to integrated spiritual formation based on the information and data resulting from this project. It has been self-published by the researcher under the title *Everything that Grows: Finding Your Spiritual Rhythm of Life in Christ*.<sup>289</sup> (See Appendix D)

This guide features the application of principles of each of the four aspects of growth described in Chapter Two: resting, awakening, growing, and reproducing. The reader is given a brief description of each facet with their related practices of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming. Each short chapter ends with formational questions for growth. The end of the book provides a hard copy of the IFS for the reader to consider areas of spiritual growth. In addition, instructions are given and a format provided for the reader to establish their own rhythms of spiritual growth.

### Final Reflections

The researcher has spent a long time and gathered extensive experience in the ministry of restoring prayer, bringing individuals to an understanding of their identity in

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<sup>289</sup> Thom Gardner, *Everything that Grows: Finding Your Spiritual Rhythm of Life in Christ* (North Charleston, SC: Create Space, 2014).

Christ. This often takes place through the healing of memories reinforced by various forms of meditation in the Scriptures. As stated in the beginning of this study, the greatest element of the believer's growth is the simple decision to live as a disciple of Christ. The end of the formational journey is the formation of the character and peace of Christ in the heart of the disciple. While this is an individual journey of the believer in Christ, it is not one taken alone. Christ who is the believer's ultimate goal is also their guide.

It is the belief and experience of the researcher that individuals prosper with a narrative track to continue on the journey of spiritual formation whether the narrative is the daily office or a rule of life. The simple track referred to in this study and included in the appendices of this project includes practices of quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming, providing a simple format to continue the journey or construct an individual rhythm of spiritual life. Integrated spiritual formation is the norm for believers who would grow up to full stature into Christ.

This continuum of spiritual formation described in this project is also applicable to many other areas of life. It provides a holistic and integrated pattern for prayer, marriage, discernment, and communication with God and people. For example, when believers pray it is best to begin with a time of quieting focus where we tune out noise. Then have a time of listening to the heart of God and pray what is heard. As believers pray, their hearts are restored with the end result of growing up into Christ.

Marriages benefit by following this same continuum of practice. Marriages grow when spouses take Sabbath times to be quiet together for purpose of listening to the voice of God together, in order to have seasons of restoring and growth.

### Spiritual Formation: A Journey Into the Heart of Christ

The formational journey may be seen in the story of the two disciples who encountered the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus. It was a journey of discovery and transformation. Journeys most generally have a destination in mind. This was a journey to find comfort in the loss of all hope. Then, “While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and *began* traveling with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. And He said to them, ““What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?”” And they stood still, looking sad.”<sup>290</sup>

The encounter with Christ began by stopping their conversation and the inner storms whose vortex was the seeming defeat of Christ at the cross. Then, Christ inquired about the words they were throwing back and forth across the road. The journey continued by the shocked followers of Jesus listening to the voice of Jesus who opened the Scriptures to reveal his true nature and identity. The hearts of those on the journey were ignited as Christ was revealed through the Word of God as they walked along in intimate conversation. They would later say to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?”<sup>291</sup> They stopped, they listened, and then they invited Jesus to stay with them. They found themselves at a table with Jesus who said the blessing over the evening meal:

“When He had reclined *at the table* with them, He took the bread and blessed *it*, and breaking *it*, He *began* giving *it* to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. They said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?” And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who

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<sup>290</sup> Lk 24:15-17 [NASB].

<sup>291</sup> Lk 24:32 [NASB].

were with them, saying, “The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon.” They *began* to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.”<sup>292</sup>

The table was a venue of intimacy and exchange where Jesus sat with them face-to-face and eye-to-eye. This intimate exchange brought about what they lacked at the beginning of the journey: true knowledge of who Jesus was and is. They stopped, they listened, and they had a restoring and intimate encounter with Jesus at the table that transformed their understanding of Jesus. Through the journey of integrated spiritual formation, believers are seated at the table with Jesus who takes the bread of the disciple’s life into his hands and makes it his. The life of the disciple becomes the life of the increasing mindfulness of Jesus Christ.

Given the totality of data gathered in this project from both the quantitative and qualitative surveys, a few observations may be made:

1. Respondents who finished the forty-day devotional also responded to the invitation to complete the qualitative survey. It may be assumed from this that they were more motivated or experienced greater transformation during the forty-day devotional journey.
2. Respondents who completed qualitative survey after the forty-day Integrated Formational Survey responded with words such as “transformational”, with a greater awareness of God’s presence. One respondent commented that through the forty-day journey he or she came to recognize that “(God) had been involved in every moment of my life.”<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Lk 24:30–35 [NASB].

<sup>293</sup> Qualitative respondent 4.

3. Respondents who pressed through to the end of the journey experienced a change in the relationship with God. One respondent commented on a change in her connection with God saying that the integrated devotional, “deepened my connection to the Father's heart and drastically transformed my opinion of how God feels about me”<sup>294</sup> This is evidence of healing and restoration.
4. Generally speaking, respondents who continued the integrated journey including all phases of, quieting, listening, restoring, and becoming, had life altering experiences of the personal presence of God that will affect their spiritual practice and relationship with God beyond the forty-day devotional period.

These observations lead the researcher to revisit the simple definition of spiritual formation as defined in this project. Spiritual formation is the believer’s journey toward the peace and character of Christ through spiritual practice.

The personal and mystical encounter with Christ is transformative within so that the character of Christ might be expressed without. As the factor analysis and qualitative data discussed in Chapter Five reveal, the believer’s intimate relationship with God causes inner transformation resulting in outward expression in behavior toward other people as expressed in the fruits of the Spirit. As believers engage Christ and grow in this mystical union, the result is a surrendered life with an unobstructed view of the face of Christ. In the words of John the Baptist, “He must increase, but I must decrease.”<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> Qualitative respondent 6.

<sup>295</sup> Jn 3:30 [NASB].

APPENDIX A  
INTEGRATED DEVOTIONAL

## Integrated Devotional

### Introduction and Instructions

Welcome to the *Healing Journey*.

The Bible is a succession of thousands of pictures through which we may see the Father's heart. In this devotional, you will be invited to *see* and experience the Scriptures in a personal way. Instead of reading for understanding, you will experience truth for transformation.

The Lord continues to speak to us in these thousands of pictures through Scripture. The Bible tells us, "*The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge*" (Ps. 19:1-2). The Word of God in the Scriptures is alive with fresh revelation and personal application for our spiritual growth and transformation.

To meditate on the Scriptures each day you will read the verse aloud several times in a soft voice until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow an image to form in your mind that reflects the Scripture. For example, if you were meditating on Psalm 23 the mental image of a shepherd might come to mind. We have chosen healing verses that are rich in visual imagery. Once you can picture the Scripture in your mind, you will be invited to respond to a few questions that will allow you to experience truth and healing in the personal presence of God. We are asking:

"What do you see?"

"What does it say about the heart of God?"

"What is God speaking to you *personally* through this verse?"

Note that some people are not as visual as others. If you are not given to visual imagery, simply focus on a key word or phrase that stands out to you. As you meditate on that key word or phrase, let your heart consider what that word or phrase means to you. Construct a mental image of what that word or phrase looks like to you in your own experience.

Here is an example to get us started in scriptural meditation. Read the following text aloud in order to practice biblical meditation.

*I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing* (John 15:5).

Repeat this text a few times until you can say it with your eyes closed. What do you picture in your mind as you repeat the verse? Perhaps the image of a vine laden with fruit fills your mind. You might see the close attachment of the branches and the vine. In any event, the Lord is speaking something to you as you meditate on His Word. Because it is a visual

image, it will remain with you—become part of you.

This verse may speak to you of the attachment and faithfulness of the Father toward you. This may then hold a personal word that you are joined to God in a way that allows you to bear fruit that He is producing—that you will remain in Him and He will produce something in you. If you find that the Scripture text for that day is too long, choose one phrase from the Scripture for meditation. Don't rush through the daily devotions. Be intentional and attentive to the voice and heart of God as you journey. We have provided a total of thirty-five devotions to be done over forty days. Each devotion is arranged into four parts: *Quieting*, *Listening*, *Restoring*, and *Becoming*. These facets of the study are meant to provide a fuller devotional experience for the reader.

After completing five devotions you will take a day to simply reflect on the truths gathered the previous five days. This is a *selah* for you to rest and reflect. Review your thoughts and journal your reflections from the previous days.

## Devotion 1

### “I AM NOT ALONE”

#### (Quieting)

**Truth:** My Father is always with me. He will never leave me.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

[Jesus said] “...[S]urely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20 NIV).

#### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind’s eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God?

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. *Lord, today You said to me:*

What was the core truth revealed to you through today’s meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming).

#### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here. (You may want to review the instructional video for restoration)

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why today’s core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 2

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** truth: My Father wants to hold and comfort me when I'm afraid.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem (Isaiah 66:13 NKJV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or, what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below. What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? Type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. Type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. *Lord, today You said to me:* Type your response below.

What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? Type your response below.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then go directly to the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked "Becoming".

### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here.

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Pray asking the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? Type your response below.

Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. Type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

### Devotion 3

#### (Quieting)

**Truth:** My Father is lovingly and faithfully watching over me.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore*  
(Psalm 121:8 NIV).

#### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. Summarize your response below.

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What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? You can type your response below.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked "Becoming".

#### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here.

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? You can type your response below.

Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 4

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** My Father provides all that I need in every situation.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*I can do everything through Him who gives me strength* (Philippians 4:13 NIV).

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. Summarize your response below.

What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming).

### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here.

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? You can type your response below.

Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

**(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 5

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** The Father is always present to help me.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10 NIV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below. What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. You can type your response below.

What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming)

### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here. (You may want to review the instructional video for restoration)

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? You can type your response below.

Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

### **(Rest and Reflect)**

Look back over the past five days and reflect on what you have learned about God and yourself. Enter your thoughts and reflections here.

## **Devotion 6**

### **(Quieting)**

**Truth:** I can rest in the strong and capable arms of my Father.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms*  
(Deuteronomy 33:27 NIV).

### **(Listening)**

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. You can type your response below.

What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming)

### **(Restoring)**

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here.

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? You can type your response below.

Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 7

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** I am chosen, treasured, and loved.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*The Lord has today declared you to be His people, a treasured possession, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments (Deuteronomy 26:18).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. You can type your response below.

What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming)

### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here.

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? You can type your response below.

Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 8

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** I am a child of the Father.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ... (Romans 8:16-17).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God?

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. You can type your response below.

What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming)

### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here.

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory. You can type your response below.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 9

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** I belong to the Father.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are Mine” (Isaiah 43:1 NIV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind’s eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. You can type your response below.

What was the core truth revealed to you through today’s meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming).

### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here. (You may want to review the instructional video for restoration)

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 10

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** My Father is always with me. He will never leave me.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from My Father I have made known to you (John 15:15 NIV)*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. You can type your response below.

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### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

### **(Rest and Reflect)**

Look back over the past five days and reflect on what you have learned about God and yourself. Enter your thoughts and reflections here.

## Devotion 11

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** The Father is always for me, never against me.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31 NIV)*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

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Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation.

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### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 12

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** Troubles do not separate me from Father's love.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*  
(Romans 8:39 NLT)

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

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### **(Becoming)**

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## Devotion 13

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** I am a unique creation of the Father. I am handmade. In all the world there's no one else like me.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well (Psalm 139:14 NIV)*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

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Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

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## Devotion 14

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** I am loved and treasured by the Creator of the universe.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness” (Jeremiah 31:3 NIV)*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind’s eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

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Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

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Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 15

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** I am important and valuable.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*Since you are precious and honored in My sight, and because I love you...*  
(Isaiah 43:4 NIV).

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

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Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

### **(Rest and Reflect)**

Look back over the past five days and reflect on what you have learned about God and yourself. Enter your thoughts and reflections here.

## Devotion 16

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** The Father loves me completely, thoroughly, and perfectly. There's nothing I can do to add or detract from that love.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*“Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet My unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor My covenant of peace be removed,” says the Lord, who has compassion on you (Isaiah 54:10 NIV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

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End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 17

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** My life has a purpose in God.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors... (2 Corinthians 5:19-20 NIV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

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End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

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## Devotion 18

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** The Father celebrates my life! He delights in me.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing (Zephaniah 3:17 NIV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

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End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 19

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** I am enough. I am absolutely complete in Christ.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9)*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. You can type your response below.

What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming).

### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here. (You may want to review the instructional video for restoration)

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? You can type your response below.

Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 20

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** I am totally covered by the love of God.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, my soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God?

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. You can type your response below.

What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming).

### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here. (You may want to review the instructional video for restoration)

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

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Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

### **(Rest and Reflect)**

Look back over the past five days and reflect on what you have learned about God and yourself. Enter your thoughts and reflections here.

## Devotion 21

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** My Father has forgiven and forgotten my sins.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for My own sake, and remembers your sins no more (Isaiah 43:25 NIV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. You can type your response below.

What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming).

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Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

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End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 22

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** Nothing I could ever do can separate me from God's love.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?*  
(Psalm 139:7)

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

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Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

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**(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 23

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** I am free from condemnation.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* (Romans 8:1 NIV)

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

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Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

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What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? You can type your response below.

Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 24

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** I have been made holy through Christ.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation (Colossians 1:22 NIV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. You can type your response below.

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Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming).

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Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? You can type your response below.

Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

**(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 25

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** I am surrounded by my Father.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*Just as Jerusalem is protected by mountains on every side, the Lord protects His people by holding them in His arms now and forever (Psalm 125:2 CEV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. You can type your response below.

What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming).

### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here. (

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? You can type your response below.

Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

### **(Rest and Reflect)**

Look back over the past five days and reflect on what you have learned about God and yourself. Enter your thoughts and reflections here.

## Devotion 26

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** My Father holds me tenderly close to Him.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*He tends His flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them close to His heart... (Isaiah 40:11 NIV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. You can type your response below.

What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming).

### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here.

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? You can type your response below.

Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 27

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** I am tucked away and safe in the arms of my Father.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*“He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection.”* (Psalms 91:4 NLT)

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind’s eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. You can type your response below.

What was the core truth revealed to you through today’s meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming).

### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here.

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? You can type your response below.

Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 28

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** I am hidden and safe in the love of my Father.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*For in the day of trouble He will keep me safe in His dwelling; He will hide me in the shelter of His tabernacle and set me high upon a rock (Psalm 27:5 NIV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. *Lord, today You said to me:*

What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming).

### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here.

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? You can type your response below.

Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 29

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** My Father is with me regardless of what is happening around me.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze (Isaiah 43:2 NIV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

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What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? Write it here.

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### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here.

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Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? You can type your response below.

Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 30

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** My Father is continually available to help me.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:6 NIV)*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. You can type your response below.

What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming).

### (Restoring)

If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here.

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

What is the truth the Lord is revealing to you now in the memory? You can type your response below.

Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

### **(Rest and Reflect)**

Look back over the past five days and reflect on what you have learned about God and yourself. Enter your thoughts and reflections here.

## Devotion 31

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** The Father's thoughts of me are always good and filled with hope.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

Take time to pray, declaring to God what you have seen today. You can type your response below.

What was the core truth revealed to you through today's meditation? Write it here.

Does this core truth from the daily meditation *feel* true to you personally? If it feels true to you then skip the (Restoring) section and go to the section marked (Becoming).

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If the core truth does not *feel* true to you, what do you feel or believe instead of this truth? For example, it may not feel that God is always with you even though that was the truth revealed through the Scripture today. You might believe instead it might feel true that you are alone. Write what you believe instead of the core truth here.

Now follow the steps below to restore truth.

Quiet yourself and pray, “Lord, I desire that your truth will also become my truth. I ask you now to reveal to me why this core truth does not feel true to me. I declare that you are still in those places in my past to bring me healing truth.”

If the Lord brings a memory to your mind that causes you not agree with what the devotion revealed today, step back and observe the memory. Ask the Lord to express His presence and truth in that memory.

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Soak in that truth in the presence of God repeating it in a low tone at a relaxed rate several times. Forgive and release anyone who had a part in any wounded memories that came to mind.

Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 32

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** My Father is walking before me, preparing the way.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland (Isaiah 43:18-19 NIV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

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### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 33

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** My Father's loving heart has planned help for me.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail (Isaiah 58:11 NIV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

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Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 34

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** The Father is trustworthy in times of difficulty.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God (Isaiah 50:10 NIV).*

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

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Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

## Devotion 35

### (Quieting)

**Truth:** I can do all things through Christ.

As you begin the devotional, quiet yourself and repeat the above phrase several times at relaxed speed. Feel the words vibrating as you say them. If during any of the daily meditations you begin to feel strong negative emotions like fear, pause and go back to rest in this phrase.

Repeat this truth aloud. Close your eyes and rest a moment in this truth.

*I can do everything through Him who gives me strength* (Philippians 4:13 NIV).

### (Listening)

Meditate on the Scripture above, saying it to yourself softly over and over again until you can say it with your eyes closed. As you repeat the Scripture, allow yourself to see it with the eyes of your heart. What is the picture you see in your mind's eye as you repeat the Scripture? Or what word or phrase stands out to you? You can type your response below.

What does the Scripture and the image in your mind reveal about the heart of God? You can type your response below.

What is the Lord speaking to you personally as you see the truth of the Scripture above? Put yourself in the picture of the Scripture above in your mind. You can type your response below.

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Describe now how you feel about the core truth revealed in the daily meditation. You can type your response below.

End your devotion by closing your eyes and resting in the truth that became true to you today.

### **(Becoming)**

Watch throughout the day to see where the truth revealed to you today becomes personal truth to you and journal your thoughts on this page along with other significant truths and impressions from your travels with the Lord today.

### **(Rest and Reflect)**

Look back over the past five days and reflect on what you have learned about God and yourself. Enter your thoughts and reflections here.

APPENDIX B

THE INTEGRATED FORMATIONAL SURVEY (IFS)

**Integrated Formational Survey****Love / *agape***

Self-centered	0	0	0	0	0	Others-centered
Withholding	0	0	0	0	0	Generous
Uncaring	0	0	0	0	0	Caring

**Joy / *chara***

Dissatisfied	0	0	0	0	0	Satisfied
Gloomy	0	0	0	0	0	Glad
Defeated	0	0	0	0	0	Triumphant

**Peace / *eirene***

Restless	0	0	0	0	0	At Rest
Insecure	0	0	0	0	0	Secure
Unsure	0	0	0	0	0	Confident

**Patience / *makrothumia***

Impatient	0	0	0	0	0	Patient
Reactive	0	0	0	0	0	Steady
Intolerant	0	0	0	0	0	Tolerant

**Kindness / *chrestotes***

Unkind	0	0	0	0	0	Kind
Harsh	0	0	0	0	0	Mild
Inconsiderate	0	0	0	0	0	Considerate

**Goodness / *agathosune***

Unethical	0	0	0	0	0	Ethical
Uncharitable	0	0	0	0	0	Charitable
Ungodly	0	0	0	0	0	Godly

**Faithfulness / *pistis***

Fearful	0	0	0	0	0	Trusting
Unreliable	0	0	0	0	0	Reliable
Dishonest	0	0	0	0	0	Honest

**Gentleness / *prautes***

Insensitive	0	0	0	0	0	Gentle
Non-receptive	0	0	0	0	0	Teachable
Proud	0	0	0	0	0	Humble

**Self-control / *egkrateia***

Undisciplined	0	0	0	0	0	Disciplined
Volatile	0	0	0	0	0	Calm
Bound	0	0	0	0	0	Free

APPENDIX C

PEER VETTING OF INTEGRATED FORMATIONAL SURVEY

### Peer Vetting of Integrated Formational Survey

Please review the following Survey on the Fruit of the Spirit and fill in the following questionnaire. (Appendix)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Church affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

**Circle one response for each of the following questions.**

- I find the IFS to be a reasonable measure of the believer's progress in development of Christ-like character.                      Yes                      No
- I find the words used to describe the components to be reasonable and biblical.
 

Yes	No
-----	----
- I find the IFS to be:    Too long                      Too Short
- I find the IFS to be:    Clear                      Unclear
  - Additional Comments and suggestions:

APPENDIX D  
QUALITATIVE SURVEY INVITATION

### **Qualitative Survey Invitation**

The researcher collected data for this qualitative survey by sending an email to invite respondents to answer questions by filling in a Microsoft Word document or opt for a telephone interview. The following is the text of the e-mail sent.

Greetings in Christ Jesus.

Thank for you your earlier participation in our study regarding integrative spiritual formation. As we began to analyze the responses for this study a few interesting and unexpected results were found. This has caused us to go to an additional length to further our study.

Your specific response along with several others was select by the researcher to apply a few qualitative questions to gain further insight into spiritual formation. Some of those selected for this additional interview were part of the group that received the devotional while others did not. Either way, the responses were important. If you are willing to participate in this little further study it would require an interview by telephone or your answering the questions by the attached Word document. Either option would be relatively short. We are interested in your specific input. If you can do a telephone interview please send a telephone number along with date and time you could respond.

Blessings and peace,

Thom Gardner

APPENDIX E  
MANUAL FOR INTEGRATED SPIRITUAL FORMATION

**Everything That Grows: Finding Your Rhythm of Life in Christ****Table of Contents**

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## Introduction

Everything that grows, whether in the natural realm or in the spirit realm, follows the same repeated cycle—a continuum of growth that Jesus described in one of His metaphorical pictures of the kingdom of God. Here we define the kingdom of God as the ever-increasing influence of the life and peace of Christ in and through us.

Jesus compared this cycle of natural growth to the growth of his life in people. I have simply recognized and labeled four parts of the cycle of the rhythm of growth in the life of Christ. They are resting, awakening, growing, and reproducing.

“The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil (Resting); and he goes to bed at night and gets up by day, and the seed sprouts and grows—how, he himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade (Awakening), then the head (Growing), then the mature grain in the head (Reproducing). But when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.” (Mark 4:26–29 NASB)

In nature, seeds carry the DNA of a life form that is transplanted into the earth to reproduce more of the same life. Corn comes from corn, potatoes from potatoes, frogs from frogs. We don't get frogs from dogs. Jesus says that we recognize people or seeds by the fruit they produce. “You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles?” (Matthew 7:16 NLT) It is the same in spiritual growth. So we may identify this rhythm of the life of Christ in us in the same way: Resting, awakening, growing, and reproducing. These four movements are in turn associated with practices or rhythms of the heart that lead to growth in the life of Christ. Further, this same rhythm provides a holistic and integrated

pattern for prayer, marriage, discernment, and communication with God and people. For example, when we pray it is best to begin with a time of quieting focus where we tune out noise. Then have a time of listening to the heart of God and pray what we hear. As we pray, there is growth and healing as we allow God, by his Spirit, to reproduce His heart and will in us.

#### Heart Cultivation

1. Consider the various rhythms or habits in your life. What kinds of rhythms do you find in your daily life?
2. Where are you growing in your personal life? In relationships with God and people? In character? In peace?
3. What have the three greatest changes been in the past 5 years of your personal life?

## Chapter One

### Heart Rhythms of Resting

In the spiritual realm, resting refers to the life and peace of Christ resting in our hearts. In rest we focus on the seed of the Christ-life in times of silence—much as a seed rests quietly in the soil after it is planted. In order for a seed to be planted in the earth, a furrow must be created and the ground broken open to receive the seed. “Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground, for it is the time to seek the LORD, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.” (Hosea 10:12 ESV) In the spiritual growth, plowing is the act of confession that says we want to reproduce the life of Christ.

In the natural, when a seed is planted in the soil an aperture opens in the seed to receive moisture from the soil. In the spiritual, resting allows us to open ourselves up to be restfully available to the watering of the Spirit. Resting is mostly about quieting the inner and outer noise of our lives to focus on the person of Christ.

In order to grow, we need to rest as a seed rests in the soil after it is planted. The idea of resting is a wordless conversation with God where we simply allow ourselves to be enfolded in the loving presence of Christ. This is not just a mental exercise, but a mindful focus on the presence of Christ through personal worship in silence. Silence before God is an act of worship itself, a demonstration of utter trust in God. “But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him.” (Habakkuk 2:20 ESV) I am becoming His holy temple. I turn away from every other life to be present to the Christ in me.

Many times thoughts and concerns take up space in our heads and hearts and compete with the presence of God. These thoughts may have to do with ministry or finances or the kids. Jesus was great at rest and connecting with the heart of the Father during his earthly ministry. He modeled that value to his followers.

Resting renews us as we wait in the embrace of God. Resting positions us for connection with the Spirit of God. "I wait quietly before God, for my victory comes from him." (Psalms 62:1 NLT) In resting we are paying attention to the present moment in the presence of God. We are breathing in and filling our lungs with the breath of God. The same breath that created us out of the dust recreates us in the present moment.

#### Personal Daily Rhythm of Resting

Here are a few thoughts on incorporating the rhythm of rest into your daily living. Set aside a time during the day when you can sit in silence. This may be in your favorite chair in a living room or it may be in your car as you arrive at your place of work or a park by a stream in the woods. The place is not important; the focus is what is important. Be mindful of His breath in you. Quiet the inner noise of competing thoughts and preoccupations with life issues. Give those thoughts and concerns to Jesus to hold so that you can be open to Him. (Sometimes it helps to envision yourself handing those concerns to Jesus.) This is a time of intentional quiet and focus, not the downloading of new information. You may take anywhere from a few minutes to half an hour or longer. The length of time is not as important as your intention to be with Christ. You may do this several times each day.

You may use this resting time to focus on a word or phrase of Scripture you are reading. The idea of resting rhythms is not Bible study, or reading a book, though those

are profitable for other heart rhythms. We might choose a phrase from Isaiah 26:3, “You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!” (Isaiah 26:3 NLT) Consider the phrase, “perfect peace.” Speak it softly each time to exhale in your breathing. This focusing phrase is like a bookmark for the presence of God. Each time the inner or outer noise wants to take center stage in us during our time of resting, we simply return to the phrase or word and give it our attention.

Another resting practice can be visually reflecting on a scriptural narrative scene such as the apostles of Jesus returning to Him after a frenzy of ministry activity. “The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and taught. Then Jesus said, “Let’s go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile.” He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn’t even have time to eat. So they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone.

(Mark 6:30–32 NLT) You may place yourself in the boat with those other intimate followers of Jesus and come to rest with Him. Perhaps you can take time to join those beloved followers of Jesus for a time of rest. Get into the boat and leave the routine behind on the shoreline. Set sail for rest and reconnect with Jesus. Don’t spend this time seeking a word from God—seek the God of the Word.

### Seasonal Rhythms of Resting

Set apart regular times each week, month, quarter or year to go to a quiet place such as a retreat center or a place by water to soak in the presence of God. This can be a day or longer when you simply pay attention to your heart and gaze on the face of Christ. Though you may come away with some kind of revelation, your main purpose is to live

and breathe in the presence of God in a quiet setting. This rhythm of growth applies to all kinds of relationships as well including marriage.

### Marriage Rhythms of Resting

If you are married, set aside time on a regular basis to be alone with your spouse, to be quiet together in the presence of God. This can be as simple as a daily space together where you pray the Scriptures over one another or take a walk together. You may choose a weekend getaway but not necessarily marriage conferences, though some conferences include times of quiet and rest. Remember that God created the Sabbath for man and not the other way around. The purpose of rest is quiet connection with God and each other. Marriages need space to rediscover the heart rhythms of resting in Christ together, to awakening to His voice. In resting together we grow and heal the bumps and bruises of real life. We establish communication and get back to the roots and come back to the table with nothing between our faces. Resting prepares our hearts to hear God together.

### Community Rhythms

Leadership teams, small groups, or ministry teams should set apart a regular time retreat that includes times of silence each year. It is also a good idea that there be a few minutes of silent reflection at the beginning of any meeting or gathering so that those attending may be quiet in order to hear the Voice more clearly. Members of the community should engage one another as to the other's personal spiritual rhythm.

In communication with people, we should practice more quieting our hearts for the judgments and opinions regarding the person at the other end of our conversations.

“Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to

“speak, and slow to get angry.” (James 1:19 NLT)

As we grow in quieting and rest in God, the seed of Christ’s life rests in the soil of our hearts, and we become focused on the present moment with Christ. As we are resting in Christ, the Holy Spirit waters that seed to release its DNA to awaken new growth and conversion in us. This leads us to the Heart Rhythms of Awakening.

### Heart Cultivation

1. How do you observe times of rest in your daily life?
2. Where are there moments in your daily living that you might establish short spaces for quieting your heart to listen to God?
3. What things tend to rob you of rest? Work? Worry? Busyness?

## Chapter Two

### Heart Rhythm of Awakening

Once a seed has been planted and is resting in the soil, it eventually awakens in germination and sends a blade or sprout through the soil. This blade breaks through in order to connect to the sun, a higher life form in the process of photosynthesis. Before that the seed lived off of its own resources under the ground. But now it moves toward the higher source of life in the sun. Jesus said that in order for something to reproduce and grow, there would have to be a death. “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives.” (John 12:24 NLTSE) Until the seed awakens and pushes through to the sun, it lives off of its own resources.

When awakening happens, it shifts to the higher source. In a spiritual sense, once the seed of the Christ-life has been planted in us it begins to move toward a higher source of life and peace. We cease striving and come to know God in deeper ways. (Psalm 46:10) This is like the spiritual process of conversion from our old life to the new in Christ. The life of Christ in me grows through the life and Spirit of the word of God. “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.” (John 6:63 NASB) I am awakened to the life of Christ and stretching toward a new source of life beyond my own resources or what I have accomplished and what I know intellectually. I do this through hearing the voice of Christ, through meditation in the words of Christ through Scripture, and through the human voices around me. “...[G]row in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.” (2 Peter 3:18)

### Personal Daily Formation

Our personal rhythm or awakening may include reflective reading in the Scriptures along with journaling insights and challenges from the word of God.

We in western Christianity tend to read for content and understanding. Reflective reading focuses on the presence of God in the word. When we read reflectively the Scriptures become the still refreshing waters to which we are led by the voice of the Shepherd Himself. It is good to establish a regular reading program but also a reflective reading program. We may read reflectively by choosing a short passage from the Scriptures and reading it three to four times slowly either aloud or silently. Read it the first time as if you were taking a bite of your favorite food. Read it a second time to chew on it a bit releasing the flavor noticing any words or phrases that stand out to you. Read it a third time prayerfully speaking the word back to the Lord with a grateful heart. Read it a fourth time to savor it. This is the “Mmmmmm” time where it goes deep to regenerate and revive us.

### Personal Seasonal Formation

Take regular times to read through whole books of Scripture reflectively. Read visually seeing the beautiful narratives of Scripture come alive. Don't read to merely define words.

### Community Formation

Meet for lunch or coffee on a regular basis with a friend or two. There are to be no discussions of ministry or business. These are times of listening to the heart of Jesus together. Engage in conversations across the table and hear the word of God that has been

implanted in a friend's heart and life. Don't try to out do one another with clever revelations and thoughts. Or, you may wish to expand your reading group by choosing a passage to read with a small group. One can read the passage out loud slowly while the others reflect and share by praying the truths in the Scripture over one another. We are inviting Christ to come into His temple—us—to overturn the tables of merchandise that His house would be a house of prayer not business.

We also must read to gain understanding of the mind of Christ. This requires deeper inductive study where we engage the Word of God thoughtfully. Reading Scripture can be reflective and also include rigorous study tools available.

### ***Heart Cultivation***

1. When do you live in your own natural abilities and forget to seek God for help and wisdom? These are places of our comfortable default.
2. Have you tried reading the Scriptures reflectively envisioning the biblical scene?  
Choose a favorite passage now and read with your spiritual eyes opened.

## Chapter Three

### Heart Rhythms of Growing

As I continue to grow toward the source of life, I become aware of things that may be obstacles to growth such as we would find in any garden; rocks, roots, and sticks. Unless we remove them they will become obstacles to further growth.

#### Rocks

Rocks are the hard places in my heart that cannot receive or reproduce the life of Christ. These are places where my heart has become hardened and closed to the will and voice of Heaven. They may be the result of disappointments. We may have formed expectations about how life and those people close to us should respond to us. Many times the hard places come from our human expectations that compete with the purposes of God. When our expectations are not met, we form judgments that become hardened places resulting in disconnection with God or people. We are then no longer open.

#### Unmet Hardened Expectations / Judgments / Hearts / Separation

Rocks are places where my wants overcome God's will. These rocks may show up in our community life together as reactions from un-surrendered areas of my heart. Here are six indications in our behavior where hardened places in our hearts are not open to connection or correction by the Spirit of God or through the community of God's people. The seed of God's word tends to bounce off the hardened soil in our hearts.

Denial	versus	Acceptance
Defensiveness	versus	Vulnerability
Dismissiveness	versus	Valuing
Deflection	versus	Openness
Dislike	versus	Affection
Distrust	versus	Trust

## Roots

Roots are those issues that live in our hearts that compete with the life of Christ like weeds in a garden. In order to identify these roots I must ask, “What is living between my face and the face of God?” (See author’s book *Healing the Wounded Heart; Overcoming Obstacles to Intimacy With God*, Destiny Image Publishers.) The roots living in our hearts may be lies or beliefs that came into our hearts as a result of past wounding or cultural programming. Lies and false beliefs result in negative self-talk such as, “I’m alone”, “I don’t belong”, “I’m not as good as...”, “I’m not good enough”, “I must be in control”, “I’m dirty”, or “There is no hope.” These also identify areas of core needs we may try to fulfill on our own. Some have a need for value so they perform to gain attention. Some may need affirmation or security. We can identify these roots by emotions and resulting behaviors as we may overreact to a relatively minor situation. For example: One of your children spills milk on the diner table and you launch into a tirade against them? The anger is coming from somewhere off the table in the past. It’s about more than spilled milk.

Roots compete with the life of Christ in us and take our attention from God and put it on ourselves. They are lies and distortions mostly about the heart and love of God. These roots are uprooted by going back to the places where lies became a part of us and uprooting them. An example of this would be when Peter denied Jesus three times by a charcoal fire (John 18:18). Jesus restored him three times by a charcoal fire (John 21:19). Jesus took Peter back to the scene of his denial at a charcoal fire in order to restore him and uproot the shame of his denial. Otherwise, Peter may have been lost and self-focused on shame for the rest of his life.

## Sticks

Sticks are obstacles that used to be alive in me but are alive no longer. They are the remnants of last year's crop that produce no fruit now. They may be traditions of religion that have faded from our memory and meaning. They may be habits or the way we are used to doing things that have not been looked at for awhile. We can determine what or where these sticks are by asking what kind of fruit they produce—whether they are life-giving or simply in the way of our spiritual growth.

## Personal and Seasonal Formation

To uproot what is competing or getting in the way of Christ's life in us, we need to pay personal attention to our own heart's inner conversations. Again, the aspects of resting and awakening are important as we pay attention to what stands out to us. Where do we overreact? Where do we form judgments or hold unforgiveness? Many times reflective reading and meditation in the Scriptures will provide a contrast that reveals our hearts to us when the Word of God does not feel true to us personally. (A book you may find helpful as you continue to grow is the author's book, *The Healing Journey, An Interactive Guide to Spiritual Wholeness*, Destiny Image Publishers.)

Taking regular times to look at the rocks, roots and sticks together with a spiritual director or close friend will be helpful. Pray together with listening hearts to find places of past wounding or disappointments and the underlying expectations. As you pray ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth to you about those expectations and hardened places. "Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.

May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.”(Ephesians 3:17–19 NLT)

### Community Formation

It is important for teams or small groups to be as open and vulnerable to one another as possible. This requires establishing healthy group guidelines in order to facilitate a safe and welcoming environment where honest discussions may take place. We share our observations within the group “speaking the truth in love.” (Eph. 4:15 NIV) Teams should prioritize the presence of God in meetings before the business. Take time to read Scripture together reflectively and pray blessing over one another.

### Heart Cultivation

1. Consider the rumblings of self-talk that go on in your heart? What kinds of rocks, roots, and sticks might be coming to the surface?
2. Think of a few key life events that have shaped your life? What were they and how did they influence your direction in life?

## Chapter Four

### Heart Rhythms of Reproducing

The goal of all heart rhythms is that the love and life of Christ become part of us, that we are becoming more like Him. This calls for transformation and reproducing the seed of Christ's life that was placed in us at the beginning of the journey. There is a difference between mere change and transformation. We may make changes to a house, for example, by adding something to it, but the house remains the same. Transformation leads to something totally new. We have torn down the old house and built something altogether new that looks like the heart of Christ. We are reproducing the seed of the character and peace of Christ. I know what is growing in me by the fruit it is producing through me. The question is, "Is the life, peace and humility of Christ becoming more evident in me? Am I growing in the fruit of the Spirit that Paul described?" (See the next section for a helpful survey.)

#### Rhythms of Individual Formation

The question, "What am I becoming?" needs to be asked to and answered by believers and those who lead them. We need input from the community around us. The following surveys may be helpful reference points. We realize that in our spiritual journey of reproducing the life of Christ each of us will encounter landmarks and land mines. How would you gauge your growth in the character of Christ? Three months from now? A year from now? We have included a survey in the next section of this book to identify areas of spiritual growth. It is suggested that you review the Spiritual Maturity Survey on a quarterly or semiannual basis to see where you have grown. You might sit down with your spiritual director or friend and ask what they see in your life.

The main question of reproducing the life of Christ in us is, “What am I becoming?” We ask ourselves and one another, “What do I believe?” or “What do you think?” but seldom take time to ask, “What am I becoming?” The answer to this question reveals what is rooted and growing in our hearts. Through following our own rhythm of spiritual life and practice we are removing whatever stands between God’s face and our own so that we may reflect the glory of Christ in a darkened world. “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:18 NASB) What veils our faces?

#### Heart Cultivation

1. What is your life reflecting to others in your spiritual community?
2. Are you becoming more like Christ in your attitude and the level of peace you live in?

## Chapter Five

### Principles of the Heart Rhythm

In the previous pages there were several suggestions regarding our finding and following a heart rhythm in each of the areas of resting, awakening, growing and reproducing in the lives of Christ-followers. These are not the only rhythms or practices available to us. There are no end of practices to help us grow in the character and peace of Christ. The variety of heart rhythms is as plentiful as there are people. We all have different lives with different rhythms. The college student may have a different rhythm than a policeman. The construction worker may have a different experience and need than a physician. Nonetheless, there are principles that can lead all of us regardless of where we are as to profession or stage of life. These heart rhythms will likely change through the seasons of life.

What is a heart rhythm or spiritual practice? A heart rhythm is a regular part of our spiritual journey that...

- Is an intentional act or practice that moves us along a path closer to God.
- Puts our focus on Christ rather than self.
- Leads to growth in the character and peace of Christ.
- May flow through anything that is from God, including creation, that reflects His heart and character.
- Leads to resting, awakening, growing and reproducing Christ in us.
- May engage any or all of the five senses.
- May be followed individually or with others, whether with one or many.

In the following section you will be invited to establish your own rhythm of

spiritual life. The ancients called this a “rule of life.” The rule consisted of prayer and reading Scripture individually and in small groups. In the next section of this book you will identify areas for spiritual growth and begin to create your own rhythms of spiritual growth.

### **Preview of the Spiritual Maturity Survey**

The Spiritual Maturity Survey that follows is simple and taken from Scripture. Paul describes the heart conditions of those who are growing in Christ. This is not a test to pass or fail. It is a survey to help us find areas where we might grow in the character and peace of Christ. The survey is based on the Fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5. “But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!” (Galatians 5:22–23 NLT)

We may look at each of these “fruits” individually to see areas for growth. These fruits are also grouped into general areas of spiritual growth. These fruits are also grouped into general area of spiritual growth focusing on our relationship with God, people, and formation of our own character.

Love	
Joy	Formation from God
Peace	
Patience	
Kindness	Formation toward People
Goodness	
Faithfulness	
Gentleness	Formation of Self
Self-control	

As you complete the survey look at each of the “fruits” but also consider them in the grouping above, looking at areas where you might grow in the formational traits from God, toward other people and yourself.

Again, this is not a test; it is a survey to help you grow in the love, peace and character of Jesus Christ. As we grow in these we are seeing the kingdom of God, the ever-increasing influence of the heart and character of Jesus Christ in us and through us to the world.

Blessings and peace to God’s beloved: You!

### **Directions for Survey Completion**

- Rate each of the following formational character traits from 1 to 5, 1 being the weakest and 5 the strongest.
- Total where indicated at the end of each group of three traits. The total for each group of three formational traits could range from 3 to 15. Any total under 8 should be considered an area for growth. (Consider adding Scriptures for reflective reading in any of the areas identified as needing growth. You may also want to sit with a trusted friend or growth group to discuss the areas you have identified.)
- Note overall strength or weakness in Growth Upward Toward God, Growth Outward Toward Others, or Growth Inward Toward Transformation.

**Integrated Formational Survey****Love / *agape***

Self-centered	0	0	0	0	0	Others-centered
Withholding	0	0	0	0	0	Generous
Uncaring	0	0	0	0	0	Caring

**Joy / *chara***

Dissatisfied	0	0	0	0	0	Satisfied
Gloomy	0	0	0	0	0	Glad
Defeated	0	0	0	0	0	Triumphant

**Peace / *eirene***

Restless	0	0	0	0	0	At Rest
Insecure	0	0	0	0	0	Secure
Unsure	0	0	0	0	0	Confident

**Patience / *makrothumia***

Impatient	0	0	0	0	0	Patient
Reactive	0	0	0	0	0	Steady
Intolerant	0	0	0	0	0	Tolerant

**Kindness / *chrestotes***

Unkind	0	0	0	0	0	Kind
Harsh	0	0	0	0	0	Mild
Inconsiderate	0	0	0	0	0	Considerate

**Goodness / *agathosune***

Unethical	0	0	0	0	0	Ethical
Uncharitable	0	0	0	0	0	Charitable
Ungodly	0	0	0	0	0	Godly

**Faithfulness / *pistis***

Fearful	0	0	0	0	0	Trusting
Unreliable	0	0	0	0	0	Reliable
Dishonest	0	0	0	0	0	Honest

**Gentleness / *prautes***

Insensitive	0	0	0	0	0	Gentle
Non-receptive	0	0	0	0	0	Teachable
Proud	0	0	0	0	0	Humble

**Self-control / *egkrateia***

Undisciplined	0	0	0	0	0	Disciplined
Volatile	0	0	0	0	0	Calm
Bound	0	0	0	0	0	Free

### **Create Your Own Personal Rhythm of Spiritual Life**

Consider the suggested heart rhythms of resting, awakening, Growing and Reproducing and the principles laid out previously for each. What might you do in each of those categories?

#### Daily or Weekly Rhythms

Resting

Awakening

Growing

Reproducing

Seasonal Rhythms Monthly, Quarterly, Annually

Resting

Awakening

Growing

Reproducing

## Community Rhythms

Resting

Awakening

Growing

Reproducing

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