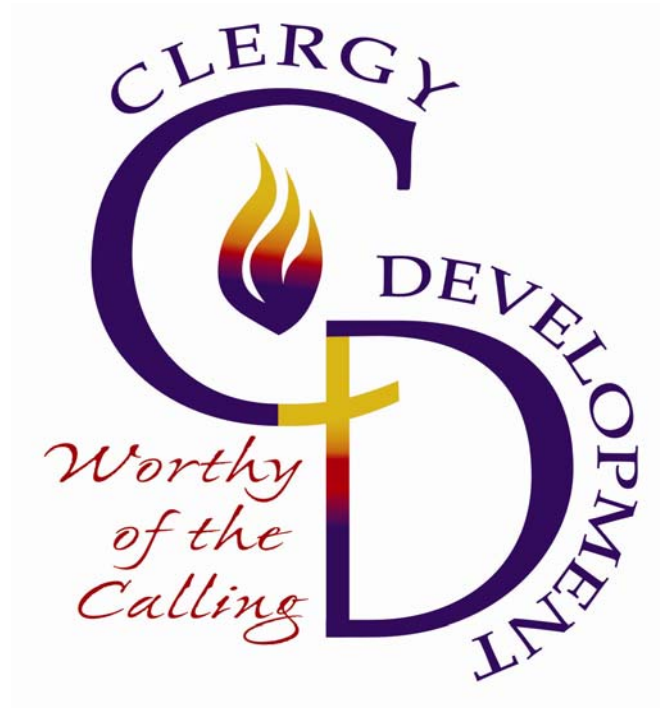

Faculty Guide

Practicing Wesleyan-Holiness Spiritual Formation



Clergy Development
Church of the Nazarene
Kansas City, Missouri
816-333-7000 ext. 2468; 800-306-7651 (USA)
2002

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The **Modular Course of Study** is an outcome-based curriculum designed to implement the educational paradigm defined by the Breckenridge Consultations. Clergy Development is responsible for maintaining and distributing the Modular Course of Study for the Church of the Nazarene.

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Series Foreword

A Vision for Christian Ministry: Clergy Education in the Church of the Nazarene

The chief purpose of all persons—indeed, all of the creation—is to worship, love, and serve God. God has made himself known in His deeds of creation and redemption. As the Redeemer, God has called into existence a people, the Church, who embody, celebrate, and declare His name and His ways. The life of God with His people and the world constitutes the Story of God. That story is recorded principally in the Old and New Testaments, and continues to be told by the resurrected Christ who lives and reigns as Head of His Church. The Church lives to declare the whole Story of God. This it does in many ways—in the lives of its members who are even now being transformed by Christ, through preaching, the sacraments, in oral testimony, and in mission. All members of the Body of Christ are called to exercise a ministry of witness and service. No one is excluded.

In God's own wisdom He calls some persons to fulfill the ministry of proclaiming the gospel and caring for God's people in a form that is referred to as the ordained ministry. God is the initial actor in this call, not humans. In the Church of the Nazarene we believe that God calls and that persons respond. They do not elect the Christian ministry. All persons whom God calls to the ordained ministry continue to be amazed that He would call them. They should continue to be humbled and amazed by God's call. The *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* states, "we recognize and hold that the Head of the Church calls some men and women to the more official and public work of the ministry." It adds, "The church, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, will recognize the Lord's call" (*Manual, Church of the Nazarene*, paragraph 400).

An ordained Christian minister has as his or her chief responsibility to declare in many ways the whole Story of God as fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. His or her charge is to "tend the flock of God . . . not under compulsion, but willingly, not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock" (1 Pet 5:2-3, NRSV). The minister fulfills this charge under the supervision of Christ, the chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:4). Such ministry can be fulfilled only after a period of careful

preparation. Indeed, given the ever-changing demands placed upon the minister, “preparation” never ceases.

A person who enters the Christian ministry becomes in a distinct sense a steward of the gospel of God (Titus 1:7). A steward is one who is entrusted to care for what belongs to another. A steward may be one who takes care of another person or who manages the property of someone else. All Christians are stewards of the grace of God. But in addition, in a peculiar sense a Christian minister is a steward of the “mystery of God,” which is Christ, the Redeemer, the Messiah of God. In all faithfulness, the minister is called to “make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel” (Eph 6:19, NRSV). Like Paul, he or she must faithfully preach “the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places” (Eph 3:8-10, NRSV).

In fulfilling this commission, there is plenty of room for diligence and alertness, but no room for laziness or privilege (Titus 1:5-9). Good stewards recognize that they are stewards only, not the owners, and that they will give an account of their stewardship to the master. Faithfulness to one’s charge and to the Lord who issued it is the steward’s principal passion. When properly understood, the Christian ministry should never be thought of as a “job.” It is ministry—uniquely Christian ministry. No higher responsibility or joy can be known than to become a steward of the Story of God in Christ’s Church. The person who embraces God’s call to the ordained ministry will stand in the company of the apostles, the Early Fathers of the Church, the Reformers of the Middle Ages, the Protestant Reformers, and many persons around the world today who joyfully serve as stewards of the gospel of God.

Obviously, one who does not recognize, or who understands but rejects, just how complete and inclusive a minister’s stewardship must be should not start down the path that leads to ordination. In a peculiar sense, a Christian minister must in all respects model the gospel of God. He or she is to “shun” the love of money. Instead, the minister must “pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness.” He or she must “fight the good fight of the faith” and “take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called” (1 Tim 6:11-12, NRSV).

Hence, the Church of the Nazarene believes that “the minister of Christ is to be in all things a pattern to the flock—in punctuality, discretion, diligence, earnestness; ‘in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left’ (2 Cor 6:6-7)” (*Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, paragraph 401.1). The minister of Christ “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, ⁸but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, ⁹holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching...able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.” (Titus 1:7-9, NASB).

In order to be a good steward of God’s Story one must, among other things, give oneself to careful and systematic study, both before and after ordination. This will occur not because he or she is forced to do so, but out of a love for God and His people, the world that He is working to redeem, and out of an inescapable sense of responsibility. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the attitude one brings to preparation for the ministry reveals much about what he or she thinks of God, the gospel, and Christ’s Church. The God who became incarnate in Jesus and who made a way of salvation for all gave His very best in the life, death, and resurrection of His Son. In order to be a good steward, a Christian minister must respond in kind. Jesus told numerous parables about stewards who did not recognize the importance of what had been entrusted to them (Mt 21:33-44; 25:14-30; Mk 13:34-37; Lk 12:35-40; 19:11-27; 20:9-18).

Preparation—one’s education in all its dimensions—for ministry in Christ’s Church should be pursued in full light of the responsibility before God and His people that the ministry involves. This requires that one take advantage of the best educational resources at his or her disposal.

The Church of the Nazarene recognizes how large is the responsibility associated with the ordained Christian ministry and accepts it fully. Part of the way we recognize our responsibility before God is seen in the requirements we make for ordination and the practice of ministry. We believe that the call to and practice of Christian ministry is a gift, not a right or privilege. We believe that God holds a minister to the highest of religious, moral, personal, and professional standards. We are not reluctant to expect that those

standards be observed from the time of one's call until his or her death. We believe that Christian ministry should first be a form of worship. The practice of ministry is both an offering to God and a service to His Church. By the miracle of grace, the work of the ministry can become a means of grace for God's people (Rom 12: 1-3). One's education for ministry is also a form of worship.

The modules that comprise the Course of Study that may lead a person to candidacy for ordination have been carefully designed to prepare one for the kind of ministry we have described. Their common purpose is to provide a holistic preparation for entrance into the ordained Christian ministry. They reflect the Church's wisdom, experience, and responsibility before God. The modules show how highly the Church of the Nazarene regards the gospel, the people of God, the world for which Christ gave His life, and Christian ministry. Completing the modules will normally take three or four years. But no one should feel pressured to meet this schedule.

The careful study for which the modules call should show that before God and His Church one accepts the stewardly responsibility associated with ordained ministry.

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Introduction

Intended Use of This Manual

This manual serves as an instructor's guide for teaching principles of *Practicing Wesleyan-Holiness Spiritual Formation* to adult learners who are preparing for ordination in the Church of the Nazarene. The content is based on intended outcomes defined through the collaborative process conducted at Breckenridge, CO, USA, between 1990 and 1997. The materials prepare the pastor-teacher to present the topic by providing background reading, lesson plans, lectures, instructions to the teacher, and teaching resources for each class session. In many lessons complete lectures, questions for guided discussions, and defined learning activities are provided.

The pastor-teacher who will lead this course should hold a master's degree. Ideally, the pastor-teacher should have participated as a student in a course using this material prior to teaching the material to others. This manual assumes that the pastor-teacher has some basic understanding of Wesleyan-Holiness theology and is actively involved in seeking personal spiritual formation.

It is further assumed that learners participating in a course using this material will be high school graduates and be adult learners beyond the traditional college age. Learners are assumed to be motivated to learn, and to have adult life-experiences. No prior college classroom experience is assumed on the part of the learners.

Acknowledgments

Every manual is the accumulation of effort by many people. Someone writes the original manuscript, others offer suggestions to strengthen the content and make the material more easily understood, and finally an editor formats the manual for publication. This manual is not different. Many people have contributed to this manual. Every effort has been made to accurately represent the original intent of the principal contributors.

Though many teachers, students, and editors have given valuable input into this course, the principal creator and writer was Wesley D. Tracy. Dr. Tracy has field-tested many of the course materials in classes in North America and in Manila at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary.

Wesley Tracy has coauthored several books on spiritual formation. *The Upward Call: Spiritual Formation and the Holy Life*, written with Morris Weigelt, Janine Tartaglia, and Dee Freeborn, was published in 1994 by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and has gone through several printings in English and Spanish. Dr. Tracy was the principal author of *Reflecting God*, a layman's textbook on spiritual formation published by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and the Christian Holiness Partnership and sponsored by the 23 supporting denominations of CHP. This book is supported by three other items written by Wesley Tracy: *The Reflecting God Workbook*, *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*, and *The Reflecting God Journal*.

Dr. Tracy holds five higher education degrees, including degrees from Southern Nazarene University, Nazarene Theological Seminary, and two doctorates from San Francisco Theological Seminary. He has published more than 1,000 articles and has written or coauthored some 25 books. He has served as a pastor, as editor of eight Christian periodicals, and as an educator at MidAmerica Nazarene University, Nazarene Theological Seminary, as well as special adult education projects in Europe, Latin America, and Asia.

Revision History

Third Quarter 2005, Revision 4, the current version,
• Text edited for gender inclusiveness
First Quarter 2004. Revision 3,

- Module title changed from *The Wesleyan-Holiness Way to Spiritual Formation* to *Practicing Wesleyan-Holiness Spiritual Formation* Fourth Quarter 2003. Revision 2,
- Copyright transferred to Nazarene Publishing House Fourth Quarter 2002. Revision 1,
- Copyright was transferred to Clergy Development Spring 2002. Original Release.
- The companion Student Guide was released.

About This Module

Content and Vision

The content of the course draws heavily upon the ideas found in *The Upward Call: Spiritual Formation and the Holy Life*, written by Wesley Tracy, Morris Weigelt, Janine Tartaglia, and Dee Freeborn (1994 by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City); and *Reflecting God*, a layman's textbook on spiritual formation published by Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and the Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000. This book is supported by *The Reflecting God Workbook*, *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*, and *The Reflecting God Journal*. Though there is, by design, no textbook for this course, both teachers and students are encouraged to read *The Upward Call* and the *Reflecting God* materials if they are available.

This course teaches the vision of the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition for the deeper Christian life. We use the term "Wesleyan-Holiness" to identify the tradition specifically. A number of Evangelical and Pentecostal groups use the word "holiness" in their names or creeds. Wesleyan-Holiness is meant to identify the body of believers who embrace the best teachings of the American Holiness Movement and the Wesleyan Revival in 18th-century England led by John Wesley. These two strands of our heritage are blended to make the spirituality taught in this course.

The gift of the Wesleyan-Holiness people to the family of churches is that it keeps the vision of the sanctified life ever before us. It is a radically optimistic vision. Most Protestant traditions cite sin as dogging the heels of even the most sincere Christian throughout life. The Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, however, teaches that through sanctifying grace God really does save us from all sin, including inward sin, in this life. Full salvation, they call it. It is about making Christlikeness a lifelong quest and experience. Every Christian generation has produced at least two kinds of Christians: the ordinary, garden variety, and those who have found the deeper

life. This course is about leading believers into that deeper life.

The structure of this course follows the *ordo salutis*, the order of salvation. In Unit 1 (Lessons 1-6) we start with the human predicament—lost in sin and darkness, but searching, longing for the Light. God’s redemptive response to our alienation is explored, culminating with the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Unit 2 is about encountering transforming grace (Lessons 7-9). The new birth and sanctification both as transforming moment and transforming journey are explored.

In Unit 3 (Lessons 10-14) the personal spiritual disciplines and devotional skills are studied. They include Bible study, prayer, the disciplines of abstinence, and spiritual journaling.

Unit 4 (Lessons 15-18) moves the “pilgrim soul” to embrace the community disciplines of worship, the sacraments, face-to-face groups, family religion, spiritual friends, and faith mentors.

In Unit 5 (Lessons 19-20) students are challenged to see service as a spiritual discipline. True to the Wesleyan heritage, service is as much a spiritual discipline as prayer or Bible study. In fact, a spirituality that does not lead to service is a noxious preoccupation with self that manicures the soul while ignoring the agonies of the world and our responsibility to the community of faith.

The in-class time for the course is about 30 hours—20 ninety-minute sessions are planned. A teacher and class may add extra sessions, but are not to eliminate any class period. The course time-design does not include taking time for translation. If translation is necessary, more class hours must be added.

In settings where the entire course is taught in an intensive week or two weeks, the homework assignments must be adjusted. Nevertheless, standards must be kept. You may wish to design assignments that include actual ministry and writing up a formal report after the end of the class. But do not let the time for completion go beyond 30 days.

The Teaching-Learning Strategy

Collaborative and cooperative learning form the heart of our educational strategy for this course. We believe

that culture-clad, experience-laden adults have plenty to teach and learn from each other. The teacher's role is facilitator and not the "sage on the stage." Each student is a valuable teaching-learning resource and not an empty head to be stuffed with information. Studies show that when students participate in their education collaboratively and cooperatively they learn faster and retain it longer than in traditional education.

Base Group Philosophy. Divide your class into permanent Base Groups of three to four persons. If students have preenrolled, do this before the first session. Otherwise do it during the first meeting of the class. The members of the Base Group form a learning team that will work together during each session. They may also be encouraged to meet beyond the classroom to study and enjoy Christian fellowship.

The learning leader and the assistant(s) should assign the membership of each group. Don't just have them number off or get together with their friends. One reason you should be the one to assign people to specific groups is to build balance. Suppose that you had 24 students. Four of them are quite sophisticated about the subject matter. Don't let them "cluster" into one group of buddies who will always be so far ahead of the class that they will loaf or get bored. Rather, spread them out, each in a separate group. There each one will have several other less-experienced students to teach. If they have credibility and leadership skills, let them be the Leader-Convener. Similar concerns pertain when it comes to new Christians, cultural, gender, or age-groups.

Each Base Group should have persons assigned to the following tasks.

1. **Leader-Convener**—presides at all meetings, in class or beyond the class. Represents his or her group to the learning leader. Takes general responsibility for the progress of the group. Keeps members on-task during meetings.
2. **Recorder**—takes notes and keeps records of important decisions, topics, and events in a "group life" journal (nothing formal, a legal pad or three-ring notebook or laptop computer will do fine).
3. **Reporter**—the spokesperson for the group when reporting, teaching, and sharing times come. He or she does not have to do all the talking and may recruit his or her group members to help with the reports.
4. **Pastor**—serves as the encourager, peacemaker, and healer of hurt feelings. Contacts absentees. Leads

devotional exercises for the group in classroom and beyond-the-classroom meetings. The pastor steps up to the plate when any one of the other four officers cannot fulfill his or her duties.

Do not be surprised if long-term friendships develop in these groups. Some groups may continue to meet long after the course is over. Encourage that—Christian fellowship is one of our aims.

The Jigsaw Method. Borrowing from the theory and practice of cooperative and collaborative learning, we recommend the Jigsaw Method. Jigsawing can be as complicated or as simple as you want it to be. For this course we chose simple.

One of the several strengths of Jigsawing is that it enables a class to cover a lot of material effectively in a short time. That is the main reason we use it in this course. Good use of class time is important in any setting. The Jigsaw Method can help.

Here is how it works. Suppose you have a lesson that has four Learning Activities. For example, a lesson on prayer might have four exercises:

1. The Prayer of Adoration
2. The Prayer of Thanksgiving
3. The Prayer of Intercession
4. The Prayer of Petition

Think of those four learning activities as part of the picture that you want your class to see. Think of them as a *jigsaw puzzle* picture. Don't even try to lead the class through all four of these exercises, one at a time. You will run out of time and leave half of the work untouched, or you will rush through it all doing nothing thoroughly.

Use the Jigsaw Method and put the class to work on all four at once. That is, give one part of the puzzle to each group. After the groups have each worked carefully with one part of the puzzle, they are to teach the rest of the class the main part of what they learned. As each group presents its part of the puzzle, the big picture becomes clear.

The result: each student works quite thoroughly on one piece of the puzzle-picture, and is taught the other three by classmates.

Here is what the time flow would be on the imaginary four learning exercises cited above.

2 minutes—the learning leader introduces the plan.

If you have already organized your class into permanent Base Groups as suggested, you don't lose any time creating small groups at this point. Everyone knows where he or she belongs and can get there in 10 seconds.

10-20 minutes—groups study (research, review, construct) their part of the puzzle-picture using resources provided.

4-6 minutes—each group to share/teach the important ideas in its part of the picture (16-24 minutes in all).

2 minutes—the learning leader (or teaching assistant) summarizes the big picture.

Total time required to process four Learning Activities is some 30-36 minutes. And look how many people got involved! Better than listening to a drone-me-to-sleep lecture, wouldn't you say?

In many lessons the Jigsaw Method is recommended. But even when this manual does not say to, you can look over the various learning exercises provided, consider the time available, and decide to Jigsaw any activities that lend themselves to group process.

Not all Learning Activities will work in small-group structures. Some activities are designed for individual work. Some topics are best taught by lecture. But with activities that can be done in groups, consider the Jigsaw Method. The research shows that students in cooperative Base Groups using the Jigsaw Method learn more, learn it faster, and retain it longer! Of course, if you are teaching fly-fishing or ceramics, that's not so important, but if you are teaching . . . well, you see the point.

Building Your Team. As the learning leader you are the captain of the team. Note that we called you learning leader rather than instructor or teacher because we see you as a playing coach, a coleruner, a facilitator of learning activities rather than a lecturer, expert, or "sage on the stage."

We strongly, seriously, stoutly, and sincerely recommend that you appoint a teaching assistant to help you plan and lead the course. You may want to find a third member of your team—a research assistant. This long course covers a vast amount of information. These two helpers can share the workload and the ministry.

Teaching Assistant—Duties and Opportunities

1. Check out the room, overhead projector, and other equipment needed.
2. Prepare handouts, overhead transparencies, bulletin boards, posters, interest centers.
3. Help plan the learning activities.
4. Lead some of the learning activities and help monitor small-group work in and beyond the class.
5. Be in charge of publicity, recruiting, and advertising the course ahead of time and preparing news releases during or after.
6. Other: _____

Research Assistant—If you choose to recruit a research assistant, he or she could take care of these duties and opportunities.

1. Research subject matter (libraries, bookstores, pastor's library, Internet, etc.) that will support the sessions as directed by the learning leader.
2. As questions arise in the sessions that no one knows about for sure, the R.A. can "look it up" and report back next session.
3. Help plan the learning experience as requested by the learning leader.
4. Assist with information for a "book and periodical table" or other interest centers as needed.
5. Refuse to pout if something he or she researched does not make it into the actual session.
6. Monitor and tabulate the Seminar Evaluation questionnaires at the end of the course.
7. Other: _____

Base Group Leaders—Another important part of the team is the corps of Base Group leaders. Contact them in advance and be sure that they will serve for the duration of the course.

After the Course. Honor your leaders and participants after the course. Thank everyone at the last session. But the real honors might come in a closing social affair, like a banquet, or maybe in an awards ceremony during a Sunday night church service, or other event. Give gifts to your teaching and research assistants. Give an award to each Base Group leader. Give a *Certificate of Participation* to each person who successfully completed the course.

Module Materials

We have tried to design this module to be flexible and easy to adapt to your situation. For each lesson, there are several support pieces, which we have called

simply “resources.” These can be used in many different ways. Resources have been reproduced in the student guide for this module. The instructor will want a copy of the student guide for his or her own use.

1. The instructor may photocopy these to use for his or her own lecture outlines. There is space to add notes from the faculty guide, from the textbook, or from the additional suggested readings. Add in your own illustrations too!
2. The pages may be photocopied onto overhead transparencies for use in class.
3. These pages appear in the Student Guide for the students’ use and participation.

One reason for developing this module is for the benefit of extension education. We understand that teachers all over the world are called upon to teach courses that are not in their area of specialty, but they teach them because they want to see pastors trained and leaders developed for the church. Extension education is basic to rapid church growth. We want to provide this as a resource for extension educators. If it helps others along the way, that’s fine too.

Another reason for developing this module is to equip indigenous faculty. We believe that a class like this is best taught and contextualized by someone from within the culture of the students. There are many fine teachers who are leaders in our churches around the world who do not have higher degrees in theology but who have the skills to teach a module like this effectively. We want to set them free to do so, and in so doing, to actually improve the module and make it more dynamic and meaningful for their context than it would have been had we held on to it and insisted on teaching it ourselves.

Intended Outcomes for the Module

The *Manual*, Church of the Nazarene, and the *International Sourcebook on Developmental Standards for Ordination* define educational preparation for ordination. Additionally, each region of the International Church of the Nazarene has developed educational guidelines to qualify educational programs for ordination offered within their region.

The USA region *Sourcebook for Ministerial Development* defines outcomes for the overall ministerial development program. The course assists candidates in developing these skills. Other courses in

the program may also address the same outcomes. The specific program outcomes that relate to this course are:

- CN23 Ability to identify and explain the Doctrine of Holiness from a Wesleyan perspective
- CP21 Ability to envision, order, participate, and lead in contextualized theologically grounded worship, and to develop and lead appropriate services for special occasions (i.e. weddings, funeral, baptism, and Lord's Supper)
- CH6 Ability to pursue holy character (Christlikeness) by practicing Christian formation and the classic spiritual disciplines as means of grace
- CH7 Ability to locate, understand, and use the resources for individual and corporate spiritual formation
- CH8 Ability to take responsibility for his or her own continuing spiritual development
- CH9 Ability to apply understanding of his or her ongoing developmental needs across the life course of the minister to the pursuit of holy character
- CH10 Ability to demonstrate a realistic self-understanding including personal strengths, gifts, weaknesses, and areas of needed growth
- CN19 Ability to identify and explain the main characteristics of the nature of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Human Person, Sin, Salvation, the Christian Life, the Church and Sacraments, and Eschatology

Additional Module Outcome Statements

- Ability to partner with a mentor/mentee community for accountability concerning spiritual growth, personal development, and ethical behavior
- Ability to cultivate a culture of devotion
- Ability to explain the history and movements of Christian spirituality
- Ability to become acquainted with diverse spiritual disciplines
- Ability to sustain spiritual growth throughout the student's life
- Ability to learn the classical and contemporary devotional literature
- Ability to distinguish the difference between faddish "spiritualities" and distinctively, truly Christian spirituality
- Ability to discern and nurture God's call on one's life to fulfill His mission within the community of faith

Each section of the faculty guide is numbered with a two-part page number. Page 5 of Lesson 3 would be numbered “3-5.” The first number is the lesson number and the second is the page number within the lesson.

The Lesson Plans are complete in themselves. They contain an Overview, Introduction, Body, and Close. The Lesson Overview provides you with a planning tool for preparing and conducting each lesson.

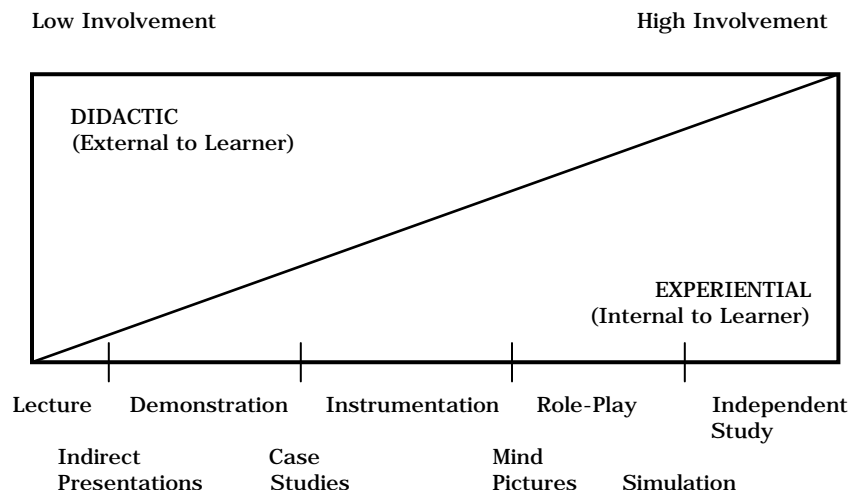
The three lesson elements follow a model presented by Michael Berger from Vanderbilt University. The key to the model is the Motivator and Punctuate the Finish. These two elements bracket the entire lesson just like capitalizing the first letter of a sentence and placing a punctuation mark at the end. The Motivator should grab the learner’s attention and Punctuate the Finish should seal the main idea of the lesson.

The Lesson Introduction should get participants’ attention, orient them to the place this lesson holds in the overall module, define the intended objectives, and prepare them for the learning activities.

The Lesson Body is the core message of the lesson. The key is to keep the learners actively involved. Even in lectures, ask questions that prompt learners to think about the content not just hear the lecture.

The following chart shows a continuum of learner involvement in different teaching methods. Lecture requires the least learner involvement, and independent study requires the most learner involvement.

METHODS CONTINUUM



A variety of learning activities are used to present information and allow learners to experiment with their new knowledge. Each individual has a set of preferred methods of learning, and he or she has different life-experiences that can color or filter what he or she actually learns. A variety of learning activities help adults adapt to the learning task—by hearing, by doing, by reading, by discussing, or by combinations of these. The learners should have opportunities to test and clarify their new learning by talking with the instructor and other participants, and applying new knowledge in real or contrived situations as soon as possible.

The Lesson Close provides a time for answering questions, reviewing the information, connecting this lesson to future lessons, making assignments, and punctuating the finish. The close does not provide any new information but gives a sense of closure to the lesson.

Homework assignments are important learning activities. They provide the student with an opportunity to synthesize classroom learning. Working on these assignments also extends the learning experience beyond the time constraints of class time.

The student—especially the adult student—needs frequent and timely feedback about his or her learning. While interaction with other students helps the learner refine what he or she is learning, feedback from the instructor is also critical to the quality of his or her learning and ultimately to his or her persistence in the Course of Study.

It is your responsibility as the instructor for this module to provide students with timely responses to homework assignments in order to enhance the learning process. Reviewing and responding to homework will also provide you with critical information about what your students are learning and how well the teaching-learning process is succeeding.

Since these modules are preparing the learner for ordination rather than leading to a university degree, a letter grade may not be appropriate. Your response to the learners' assignments should be thoughtful and in most cases it should be written. Its purpose will always be to refine and enhance the learning of the student.

Teaching Resources are reproduced in the student guide. Each resource sheet is numbered for the lesson in which the resource is first used. The first resource page for Lesson 2 is numbered “2-1.”

You must determine how each resource will be used in your context. If an overhead projector is available, then you can make transparencies by replacing the paper in your photocopy machine with special transparency material.

The student guide for this module contains the series foreword, acknowledgments, syllabus, copies of all resources, lesson objectives, and assignments. A copy of the student guide should be made available to each student.

Recommendations for printing. You may print this faculty guide if desired. The introduction and lesson plan segments are formatted for printing on both sides of the paper. The resource pages of the student guide should be printed on one side for use as transparency or handout masters.

The student guide should be printed on one side.

A Hidden Agenda

Hidden curriculum issues . . . because the way we teach teaches

In each session, there are certain methodological and environmental things to consider.

First, consider the classroom arrangement. Whenever possible, the room should be arranged to encourage a sense of community. Either the group should sit in a circle or around a table. If the group is very large, chairs can be arranged for easily moving into clusters for discussion.

Second, consider how you present yourself as teacher. Standing behind a lectern with your students facing you in rows says that you are above the students and have something to give them (although in a very large group this standing to teach may be unavoidable). Sitting as part of the circle makes the teacher a co-learner at the same level as the students. Speak naturally. Pay close attention to your students, and value the things they share. Learn their names. Encourage participation. Remember that you are

modeling for them, and the way you teach will teach them far more than the words you say.

Third, invite the Holy Spirit's presence in the classroom. Do this each time the class meets.

Fourth, the sharing of stories activity does more than help the students begin to reflect on their own Christian experiences. It is a way to build community between the students. This is more than an exercise to be checked off. It is vital to set the tone of your intentional community.

When meeting times exceed 90 minutes, consider adding break times. The break between segments is an important time for community building. Remain available to the students during this time. Consider offering coffee or tea during this time as a way to encourage fellowship.

Journaling: The Key to Spiritual Formation

Journaling is a major assignment of each module in the Ministerial Preparation Course of Study. It is the integrating element that helps you draw spiritual meaning and ministerial application from the content of each module whether the module concentrates on content, competency, character, or context. It ensures that the "Be" component of "Be, Know, and Do" is present in every module in which you participate. What is journaling and how can it be meaningfully accomplished?

Journaling: A Tool for Personal Reflection and Integration

Participating in the Course of Study is the heart of your preparation for ministry. To complete each module you will be required to listen to lectures, read several books, participate in discussions, and write papers. Content mastery is the goal.

An equally important part of ministerial preparation is spiritual formation. Some might choose to call spiritual formation devotions, while others might refer to it as growth in grace. Whichever title you place on the process, it is the intentional cultivation of your relationship with God. The module work will be helpful in adding to your knowledge, your skills, and your ability to do ministry. The spiritual formation work will weave all you learn into the fabric of your being,

The Syllabus contains this explanation of journaling. Journaling provides the spiritual formation component for the module and is an integral part of the learning experience.

Have students read the journaling section during the Syllabus review in Lesson 1 and emphasize that journaling is an assignment for each lesson in the module.

When giving assignments in each lesson, assign journal writing each time the group meets.

allowing your education to flow freely from your head to your heart to those you serve.

Although there are many spiritual disciplines to help you cultivate your relationship with God, journaling is the critical skill that ties them all together. Journaling simply means keeping a record of your experiences and the insights you have gained along the way. It is a discipline because it does require a good deal of work to faithfully spend time daily in your journal. Many people confess that this is a practice they tend to push aside when pressed by their many other responsibilities. Even five minutes a day spent journaling can make a major difference in your education and your spiritual development. Let me explain.

Consider journaling time spent with your best friend. Onto the pages of a journal you will pour out your candid responses to the events of the day, the insights you gained from class, a quote gleaned from a book, and an ah-ha that came to you as two ideas connected. This is not the same as keeping a diary, since a diary seems to be a chronicle of events without the personal dialogue. The journal is the repository for all of your thoughts, reactions, prayers, insights, visions, and plans. Though some people like to keep complex journals with sections for each type of reflection, others find a simple running commentary more helpful. In either case, record the date and the location at the beginning of every journal entry. It will help you when it comes time to review your thoughts.

It is important to chat briefly about the logistics of journaling. All you will need is a pen and paper to begin. Some folks prefer loose-leaf paper that can be placed in a three-ring binder, others like spiral-bound notebooks, while others enjoy using composition books. Whichever style you choose, it is important to develop a pattern that works for you.

Establishing a time and a place for writing in your journal is essential. If there is no space etched out for journaling, it will not happen with the regularity needed to make it valuable. It seems natural to spend time journaling after the day is over and you can sift through all that has transpired. Yet, family commitments, evening activities, and fatigue militate against this time slot. Morning offers another possibility. Sleep filters much of the previous day's experiences, and processes deep insights, that can be recorded first thing in the morning. In conjunction with devotions, journaling enables you to begin to weave

your experiences with the Word, and also with module material that has been steeping on the back burner of your mind. You will probably find that carrying your journal will allow you to jot down ideas that come to you at odd times throughout the day.

It seems we have been suggesting that journaling is a handwritten exercise. Some may be wondering about doing their work on a computer. Traditionally, there is a special bond between hand, pen, and paper. It is more personal, direct, aesthetic. And it is flexible, portable, and available.

With regular use, your journal is the repository of your journey. As important as it is to make daily entries, it is equally important to review your work. Read over each week's record at the end of the week. Make a summary statement and note movements of the Holy Spirit or your own growth. Do a monthly review of your journal every 30 days. This might best be done on a half-day retreat where you can prayerfully focus on your thoughts in solitude and silence. As you do this, you will begin to see the accumulated value of the Word, your module work, and your experience in ministry all coming together in ways you had not considered possible. This is integration—weaving together faith development and learning. Integration moves information from your head to your heart so that ministry is a matter of being rather than doing. Journaling will help you answer the central question of education: "Why do I do what I do when I do it?"

Journaling really is the linchpin in ministerial preparation. Your journal is the chronicle of your journey into spiritual maturity as well as content mastery. These volumes will hold the rich insights that will pull your education together. A journal is the tool for integration. May you treasure the journaling process!

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Lesson 1

What Is Spiritual Formation?

For Unit 1, Introduction and Objectives see Resource 1-0

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide Resource 1-1
0:15	Getting to Know You	Small Groups	Student Guide
0:30	Defining Key Concepts	Lecture	Resource 1-2 Resource 1-3
0:45	The Big Picture	Overview and Response	Student Guide
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide Resource 1-4

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

Wesley Tracy, et al. *The Upward Call*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, 9-53.

Wesley Tracy, et al. *Reflecting God*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000, 5-12, 39-40.

Wes Tracy. *Reflecting God Workbook*. 44-45.

Review the Syllabus, the Faculty Guide, and the Student Guide.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- define and explain the key concepts of *transformation* and *spiritual formation* as they will be used in this class
- appreciate the “big picture” of this course and embrace the study of their own spiritual journey
- know each other better, and form course-long Base Groups of study partners

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

None

Assign for next lesson

Choose an Assignment

Given the fact that we each have preferred learning styles, you have a choice. Each student is to complete one of the following and hand in the report at our next meeting. Or the assignment can be sent to the learning leader by e-mail.

- Bible Study: Read the story of Abraham or Joseph in Genesis and write a two-page paper on the character development you notice. That is to say, write about the gradual transformation of Abraham or Joseph.
- Key Concepts: After considering the content of the student materials, the Bible verses, and hearing the discussions of “transformation” and “spiritual formation,” write a definition of these terms in your own words.
- Storytelling: Find an audience of at least three persons (of any age) and read or tell them the

stories of “The King and His Two Sons” and “Rapunzel.” Prepare a list of at least three questions that give them a chance to tell you what the story is about. Write up their response in a one- to three-page report.

- Interview: Interview two or three persons over the age of 21. Explain to them the concept of “transformation” as treated in today’s class session. Then ask them to share examples of both gradual and instantaneous transformation that they have observed or experienced. Write an account that captures the most important aspects of the interviews.

Journal Prompts

- One idea, Bible verse, or story that made an impression on me in class today was . . .
- A new idea I encountered today is . . .
- The most admirable thing I learned from or about a classmate is . . .
- One thing that made me uncomfortable today was . . .
- The effort that I am willing to put into this course and into my own spiritual formation during this module is best described by the word . . .
- The prayer I most want to pray right now is . . .

Lesson Introduction

(15 minutes)

Motivator

At the beginning of the class pass out 3"x 5" cards. Use different colored cards. For example, suppose you have 12 students: give four of them blue cards, four yellow, and four pink. Each student will write his or her first name on the card. Pass around a roll of masking tape and have the students attach their name tag to their clothes with a loop of tape. This will color-code the students randomly. If you have pre-assigned the cooperative learning Base Groups as suggested earlier, give out the colored cards according to those assignments. When you ask the class to break into discussion groups, those with same-colored name tags will form the groups.

Next, read this story aloud to the whole class or tell it in your own words.

The King and His Two Sons

Once there was a king who wanted his two sons to grow up to be courteous, well-mannered gentlemen. But in their youth their behavior made him wonder if they would ever reach such a goal.

He challenged the boys with this proposition: Suppose a man wanted his son to become a gentleman. Could he make a gentleman of him by proper training and education?

The first son answered, "Of course, train him right and the father could make whatever he wants out of the boy."

The second son declared, "No, you are wrong. No amount of mere training would produce a gentleman."

The king, seeing that they disagreed, gave the boys a month to think and study. Then they would be summoned to appear before the king, and each would try to prove his case. The one who proved his case would be given his father's throne when the king passed to the other world.

The first son decided to think it over by meditating in a tavern. He ordered a drink (probably Coca-Cola). To his surprise he saw that his drink was served to him by a cat, a cat dressed in a waiter's uniform, walking on its back legs. Aha! If you can train a cat to be a waiter—well, the first son knew he had the winning argument. He purchased the trained cat from the tavern owner. It cost him plenty, but he could afford it because soon he would be the king.

The second son saw what had happened. He too thought that his brother had won the argument and would soon wear the king's crown. How the second son wanted to be king. But how could he compete with a cat trained as a waiter—and a good one at that. Then one day as he walked sadly down the street thinking of the lost throne, he saw something that made him smile.

The day came for the hearing before the king. The first son presented his trained cat. The cat was dressed in royal attire, walked on its back legs, and daintily served the king a plate of three chocolates.

Next the elegant, trained cat was to serve the king hot tea. But just as he approached the king with the steaming potion the second son opened the bag he was carrying and emptied it on the floor. Five frightened mice went running for cover. The elegant, trained cat dropped the tea, scalding the king. On all fours, the cat pounced on the nearest mouse, snarling and growling and gobbling its favorite food!

This story was half the final examination for a spiritual formation course at a seminary in Manila.

Refer students to Resource 1-1.

Your instructions are the same as theirs: In groups of four—knee-to-knee and eye-to-eye—discuss the story. Then in one sentence write the significance of this story for spiritual formation.

Each group will write one answer. Each group's answer is to be shared with the whole class.

Two group answers from the Manila seminary class were precisely accurate. Share these with the class after they have written and shared their own answers. If possible, make wall posters of these answers.

“As good as training and discipline are, when it comes to our hearts, transformation is what we need most.”

“Training is good, but it's transformation we need.”

Orientation

That brings us to the heart of our lesson today and to the heart of the whole course. TRANSFORMATION is the key word, and 2 Corinthians 3: 18 is our Key Verse:

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being *transformed* into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (NIV, emphasis added).

Here's another translation of that verse:

All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being *transformed* into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit (NRSV, emphasis added).

Spiritual formation is about transformation.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

To help students

- define and explain the key concepts of transformation and spiritual formation as they will be used in this class
- appreciate the “big picture” of this course and embrace the study of their own spiritual journey
- know each other better, and form course-long Base Groups of study partners

Lesson Body

Getting to Know You

(15 minutes)

As the learning leader you should go first. Share your answers to the questions. Your "satisfaction, comfort, encouragement" may come from personal, spiritual, family, or professional life. Set the right example by taking only about two minutes for your answers to the questions.

Sitting "knee to knee and eye to eye" in groups of four, share your answers to these questions:

1. What is your full name? Your nickname?
2. What has given you the most satisfaction, comfort, or encouragement during the past year?

Now that you know each other a bit better, organize your group for further study during the course. You will be working together for a long time. Select the following officers:

Direct students to the syllabus on pages 11-12 in the Student Guide for the list and description of the four officers.

Leader-Convener—presides at all meetings, in class or beyond the class. Represents his or her group to the learning leader. Takes general responsibility for the progress of the group. Keeps members on-task during meetings.

Recorder—takes notes and keeps records of important decisions, topics, and events in a "group life" journal (nothing formal, a legal pad or three-ring notebook or laptop computer will do fine).

Reporter—the spokesperson for the group when report, teaching, and sharing times come. He or she does not have to do all the talking and may recruit his or her group members to help with the reports.

Pastor—serves as the encourager, peacemaker, and healer of hurt feelings. Contacts absentees. Leads devotional exercises for the group in classroom and beyond-the-classroom meetings. Fills in for any of the other officers in their absence.

Lecture: Defining Key Concepts

(15 minutes)

Training, education, discipline, hard work—all these are good, but when it comes to our sinful hearts it is transformation we need.

Two Dimensions of Transformation

Refer students to Resource 1-2.

To transform means to change. The word can mean to change the outward appearance—to change the outward form. That can be a superficial change. The New Testament word for changing the outward appearance is *metasche*. This is the word used when the Bible speaks of false prophets masquerading or taking on the outward form of apostles and when the devil himself takes on the form of an angel (2 Cor 11:13-14).

We will treat transformation of both kinds in greater detail in a later lesson. The point to make here is that spiritual formation is not something we can do if we have the right recipe and work really hard. Transformation is the work of God.

But there is another word for transformation that means to change or convert the nature, the personality, and the character. *Metamorphoo* is the word used when the Bible tells us, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom 12:2). This same word is used in 2 Corinthians 3:18, “And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being *transformed* into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (emphasis added).

Transformation is the work of God.

Biblical nature and character transformation comes in at least two brands.

Instantaneous Transformation

It can be quick, as in the “twinkling of an eye” change when a person meets Christ and is born again. “If anyone is in Christ,” the Bible says, “he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Cor 5:17). That is instantaneous transformation. Another example of instantaneous transformation is seen in Acts 15:9 when the new believers were baptized with the Holy Spirit and experienced the cleansing of “their hearts by faith.” The sanctifying Spirit can cleanse the heart in the twinkling of an eye.

Transformation on the Journey

Spiritual transformation can be as slow as a tadpole becoming a frog or a cocooned larva becoming a butterfly. It can take decades, as in a child becoming a mature adult. It can take most of a lifetime, as we see in the life of Abraham who took a century or more to move from a fledgling of faith to passing test after test and finally becoming the “friend of God” through whom all nations of the earth have been blessed.

This kind of transformation happens over time. This is the transformation of 2 Corinthians 3: 18. “All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are *being transformed* into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (NRSV, emphasis added).

Many classic stories focus on a hero who sets out on a journey. It takes longer than expected. Great difficulties and dangers arise. But by journey’s end the traveler is transformed. Think, for example, of Joseph who went from an arrogant young snob in a coat of many colors, to kidnap victim, to slave, to prisoner, and finally to ruler saving God’s people.

This is the sort of transformation that awaits every saved and sanctified Christian: a lifetime of ongoing transformation into the image of Jesus Christ. The old-time Holiness people testified: “I am sanctified and I am being sanctified.”

Note that the transforming journey is made out of the experience of saving and sanctifying grace and not merely in search of them. Thus the experiences of being born again and being sanctified do not form the apex of spiritual formation; rather, they form the starting place for a journey, an adventure, into wholeness and Christlikeness.

Both instantaneous and gradual transformation are utterly essential for the journey of spiritual formation.

Defining Spiritual Formation

The phrase “spiritual formation” derives from Galatians 4: 19 where St. Paul wrote, “My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.” Paul uses the word “morphoo” (form)—closely related to “metamorphoo” (transform)—and it refers to the essential nature, not mere outward form. Paul is praying that the inward nature of the Galatian believers would become so like Christ that one could say that Christ has been formed in them. They would be mere humans, not divine, not a Savior themselves, but they would have real Christlike character and behavior.

The authors of *The Upward Call* define spiritual formation in these words:

Display and refer students to Resource 1-3.

“The whole person in relationship with God,
within the community of believers,
growing in Christlikeness,
reflected in a Spirit-directed, disciplined
lifestyle,
and demonstrated in redemptive action
in our world.”

Spiritual formation then is the outworking of the grace of God in the hearts and actions of human beings. It begins with prevenient grace and atoning grace provided “before the foundation of the world.” We may first consciously experience it as saving grace (conversion) and then sanctifying grace, and then the grace for a lifetime of growth until we “become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:13).

Spiritual formation is more than a matter of the interior life. It includes Christian fellowship, community, and worship (Eph 4:15-16) as well as acts of service (Gal 6:10). We must keep our eyes upon Christ constantly, for into His image we are being transformed.

The transforming power comes from God—every bit of it. We cannot transform ourselves. Through the centuries, however, believers have discovered that certain disciplines, devotional skills and practices, and acts of Christian service keep us in the presence of Christ where the Holy Spirit has a chance to go on transforming us. This course will focus primarily on those very spiritual disciplines, devotional skills, and practices that open the door to the transforming Spirit.

The Big Picture

(35 minutes)

Lead the students through the Student Guide. Read through the information with the class.

Review the Student Guide

- Foreword
- Vision Statement
- Educational Assumptions
- Outcome Statements
- Recommended Reading
- Course Requirements
- Assignments
- Course Outline and Schedule
- Course Evaluation
- Additional Information

- **Journaling**

Are there any questions concerning this module?

Journal Prompts for Today

Allow the students whatever time remains from "The Big Picture" portion of this lesson.

Your journaling assignment starts today. We will take a few minutes for you to begin writing. The Journal Prompts for you to use for this lesson are found in the Student Guide on the Lesson 1 page (p. 19) under the Homework Assignment section.

One idea, Bible verse, or story that made an impression on me in class today was . . .

A new idea I encountered today is . . .

The most admirable thing I learned from or about a classmate is . . .

One thing that made me uncomfortable today was . . .

The effort that I am willing to put into this course and into my own spiritual formation during this term is best described by the word . . .

The prayer I most want to pray right now is . . .

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Have you accomplished each of them?

- define and explain the key concepts of *transformation* and *spiritual formation* as they will be used in this class
- appreciate the “big picture” of this course and embrace the study of their own spiritual journey
- know each other better, and form course-long Base Groups of study partners

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Homework Assignments in the Student Guide.

Choose an Assignment

Given the fact that we each have preferred learning styles, you have a choice. Each student is to complete one of the following and hand in the report at our next meeting. Or the assignment can be sent to the learning leader by e-mail.

- **Bible Study:** Read the story of Abraham or Joseph in Genesis and write a two-page paper on the character development you notice. That is to say, write about the gradual transformation of Abraham or Joseph.
- **Key Concepts:** After considering the content of the student materials, the Bible verses, and hearing the discussions of “transformation” and “spiritual formation,” write a definition of these terms in your own words.
- **Storytelling:** Find an audience of at least three persons (of any age) and read or tell them the stories of “The King and His Two Sons” and “Rapunzel.” Prepare a list of at least three questions that give them a chance to tell you what the story is about. Write up their response in a one- to three-page report.
- **Interview:** Interview two or three persons over the age of 21. Explain to them the concept of “transformation” as treated in today’s class session. Then ask them to share examples of both gradual and instantaneous transformation that they have observed or experienced. Write an account that captures the most important aspects of the interviews.

Journal Prompts:

- One idea, Bible verse, or story that made an impression on me in class today was . . .
- A new idea I encountered today is . . .
- The most admirable thing I learned from or about a classmate is . . .
- One thing that made me uncomfortable today was . . .
- The effort that I am willing to put into this course and into my own spiritual formation during this module is best described by the word . . .
- The prayer I most want to pray right now is . . .

Reading Assignment

- Examine the lesson for next week, “Who Needs Transformation?” In addition, read any of these sources you can find.
- Dunning, H. Ray, “Humanity as Sinful,” *Grace, Faith and Holiness*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988, chapter 9.
- Grider, J. Kenneth, “The Doctrine of Sin,” *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, chapter 10.
- Tracy, Wesley, et al. “Somehow I Expected More,” and “What Went Wrong, Anyway,” *Reflecting God*, student textbook. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2000, chapters 1 and 4.
- Morris Weigelt, et al. “Sabotaged By Sin,” *The Upward Call*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, chapter. 2.

Punctuate the Finish

A Story of Transformation

Refer students to Resource 1-4.

Remember the fairy tale about Rapunzel? She was held captive in a dark tower by a wicked witch. The evil witch removes all the mirrors so that Rapunzel can never see what she looks like. She keeps telling Rapunzel that she is world-class ugly. Really hard to look at. The witch told her, “Rapunzel, you look just like me.”

Poor Rapunzel believes it. With no mirrors she cannot see her real beauty. Thus, she remains a prisoner of her supposed ugliness. The witch knows that believing she is ugly she will never try to escape.

Then along comes Prince Charming on his white horse. At that moment Rapunzel is leaning out of the tower to get some fresh air. The prince sees her. Their eyes meet and it is love at first sight.

Rapunzel lets down her beautiful long hair, and the prince climbs up it to the tower to rescue her. They gaze at each other lovingly. In the shining eyes of Prince Charming, Rapunzel sees the reflection of her own face. In the mirror—in the mirror of his eyes—she sees for the first time that she is beautiful.

As you weep over the ugliness of your sin, remember that you are more than a sinner. You are created in God's image. Mirrored in the eyes of the Savior you will first come to see your true beauty, the beautiful Christian that you can become.

Have you experienced an instant transformation like that?

Lesson 2

Who Needs Transformation?

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:08	Getting to Know You Better	Small-Group Sharing	Resource 2-1
0:23	The Human Predicament	Montage-poster making	Resource 2-2 Poster making supplies
0:48	Longing for the Light	Lecture	
1:00	The Sound of Crashing Idols	Discussion	Resource 2-3
1:15	The Two-Minute Paper	Writing Exercise	
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide Resource 2-4

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

Wesley Tracy, et al., "What Do You Say to a Hungry Heart?" *The Hunger of Your Heart*, (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 1997), 10-15.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), 11-17.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 15-22.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*, 7-9.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- understand the human predicament of being unholy and unhappy, lost yet longing for the Light
- describe some of the signs of the longing and searching heart as expressed in some contemporary modern and postmodern religious and secular ideologies
- own their own sense of alienation and longing in the past and present
- write an incisive “two-minute paper” on the human need for transformation
- apply their learning to a ministry setting by identifying fruitful preaching resources from the learning activities of this lesson

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Choose one:

- Bible study
- Key concepts
- Storytelling
- Interview

Journaling

Assign for next lesson

Bible Study

- Read the first 11 chapters of Genesis.
- Memorize 2 Corinthians 3: 18.

Reading

If the book *Reflecting God* is available to you, read chapters 2 and 3. Also, check out pages 15-22 of the *Reflecting God Workbook*.

Journal Prompts

- In your spiritual life journal respond to this: If I was going to use two of the anecdotes, quotations, or ideas from today’s lesson in a sermon I would select . . .
- Record your reflections about new things you learned today about two or three of your classmates. Write a one-sentence prayer for each of them.

Lesson Introduction

(8 minutes)

Accountability

Call on one of the students to read their report from the homework selection.

Collect the homework. All homework should be critiqued and returned next lesson.

Motivator

Pop Quiz

Which of the following is the most reproduced piece of art in the last 20 years?

- A. *Mona Lisa*
- B. Warhol's *Last Supper*
- C. Beatle's poster
- D. *The Scream*

You can download this piece of art free from the Internet. Type "The Scream" for your search engine.

Answer: *The Scream*.

Edvard Munch of Norway painted *The Scream* in 1893. At its first exhibit in Berlin the critics found it uncivilized, barbaric, insane, even subhuman! The critics and the public drove *The Scream* into abandoned obscurity. It was out of joint with the times.

But it is not out of joint with our times. In recent years that painting has decorated more T-shirts, posters, note pads, calendars, night-lights, beer bottles, mouse pads, and coffee mugs than any other piece of art!

Michael Parke-Taylor, the curator of the gallery in Toronto that houses a major Munch exhibit, claims that *The Scream* stands as THE "image of modern man—totally stressed out and angst-ridden."

Orientation

Today we explore the human predicament. Mankind is lost, unhappy, and unholy, angst-ridden yet searching for the Light—often in all the wrong places.

Understanding the human predicament is foundational to spiritual formation.

Learner Objectives

Direct students to the Learner Objectives in the Student Guide.

To help students

- understand the human predicament of being unholy and unhappy, lost yet longing for the Light
- describe some of the signs of the longing and searching heart as expressed in some contemporary modern and postmodern religious and secular ideologies
- own their own sense of alienation and longing in the past and present
- write an incisive “two-minute paper” on the human need for transformation
- apply their learning to a ministry setting by identifying fruitful preaching resources from the learning activities of this lesson

Lesson Body

Getting to Know You Better

(15 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 2-1.

Instruct group members to respond in two rounds. Each member picks one item to answer and then after everyone has spoken each member will respond to a second question. Sharing is expected, but no one is to be forced into sharing anything.

Since your students will be working in Base Group teams throughout the term, group building is important. Therefore, do not neglect this exercise that helps them to get to know each other better. They will be sharing meaningful past experiences and feelings. This is a step toward them becoming spiritual friends and counselors to one another as well as study partners.

Please get into your Base Groups and share with your group your answer to two of the following:

1. *Where was your favorite childhood hiding place?*
2. *What was the first job you had that paid money?*
3. *When was the last time you cried?*
4. *Who was your hero when you were 12 years old?*
5. *When (if ever) did God become more than a word to you?*
6. *What pastor, teacher, or parent made a positive difference in your life?*
7. *Who or what was the center of human warmth in your childhood home?*
8. *If your life was made into a movie, what would the title be?*
9. *When did you fall in love for the very first time?*
10. *What Bible verse did you stand on in a very difficult time?*
11. *Where would you rather be than here today?*
12. *What was the happiest moment of your childhood?*
13. *What book (besides the Bible) has changed your life?*
14. *What was your most embarrassing moment?*
15. *If you could trade places with anyone in the world, who would you most want to be?*
16. *If you had the next six months off "with pay" so you could write a book, what would your topic be?*

A Montage of the Human Predicament

(25 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 2-2.

Present the eight ideas that show the emptiness and meaninglessness of contemporary human existence in a short talk.

Something has gone wrong with the human enterprise. Haunted by emptiness and meaninglessness, harassed by guilt and remorse, dogged by shame and depression, we stumble painfully through the darkness. Our writers and filmmakers say it—and we all know about it from experience.

Consider the following statements:

1. "We are aliens from our home. . . . Modern man is no longer merely an exile. He has forgotten his home and has no hope of a promised land" (British

theologian Michael Green, *New Life, New Lifestyle* [Multnomah, 1984], 17).

2. “Nothing faithful, vulnerable, fragile can be durable. . . . Death awaits these things like a cement floor awaits a dropping light bulb” (Novelist Saul Bellow, *Herzog* [Viking], 289-90).
3. “Jesus wouldn’t want me for a sunbeam” (Rock star Curt Cobain, shortly before he killed himself).
4. “How shall the heart be reconciled to its feast of losses?” (Stanley Kunitz, poet, “The Layers” [W.W. Norton], 2000).
5. “I live in the desert like a pelican, in a ruin like a screech owl, I stay awake, lamenting like a lone bird on a roof” (Ps 102:6-7, JB).
6. “Humanity without God is a seed upon the wind. . . . In the grip of [the wind] . . . what is a seed—no more than a particle of dust, a nameless nothing” (Howard Thurman, clergyman, *Reflecting God* [Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2000], 11).
7. “I’m for anything that will get you through the night, be it prayer, pills, or a bottle of Jack Daniels” (Frank Sinatra, dead singer, *Reflecting God*, 14).
8. “Life’s a long headache in a noisy street” (Allen Ginsburg, poet, from *Howl*).

Provide poster making materials and tools: tape, newsprint, flip chart, markers, scissors, and a good supply of old magazines and newspapers (from which pictures or headlines might be cut). Some groups might want to use a laptop computer to make their montage poster. If your class is small, ask students to work in pairs rather than groups.

After the groups have made their posters, have the spokesperson for each one present the poster to the class, explaining the meaning of the signs and symbols they have created or collected. Don’t forget the “hopeful” note.

Each Base Group is to make a montage poster on the theme of one of the statements. The statement itself can appear on the poster. Include in your work a spark of hope—a Bible verse, a Christian doctrine, or an inspirational quote, etc.

Lecture: Longing for the Light

(12 minutes)

“I must break through this deadness . . . at times this . . . crushes the very soul.”

Fridtjof Nansen, Norwegian explorer, penned these words in his ship’s log. Many expeditions to reach the North Pole by sea had ended with ice-bound ships and frozen sailors, but Nansen had studied the ocean currents. He believed that the best thing to do was trust the current of the Arctic Ocean. Therefore, in the summer of 1893, he set his ship, the *Fram*, adrift in the ocean current. His goal was to drift to the Pole and beyond it, coming out on the other side into the sun-sparkled Pacific.

But soon the *Fram* was locked into frozen solidarity with millions of acres of ice in the polar ice cap. He sat there all winter. Then came a short spring and summer that thawed almost nothing. Winter found him with deck, riggings, and rudder frozen in uselessness. In the middle of that second dark Arctic winter he wrote: "Life seems as dark as the winter night outside; there is sunlight upon no other part of it except the past and the far, far distant future. . . . I must break through this deadness."

Nansen could remember the sunlight, and he hoped to see it again in a future too far distant to be of much help in a six-month polar night.

After two years, the soul-crushed Nansen tried to "break through the deadness" by leaving his ship. With one companion he set out to walk to the North Pole. Fat chance. The jagged, icy terrain pounded them into submission. The two trudgers took refuge in a shell of a cave and shivered through the third winter eating polar bear meat and remembering the sunshine and hoping to feel it again in some distant future.

Fridtjof's story has a happy ending. After three years of frozen oneness with the polar ice cap, he was rescued and he went home.

Imagine his feelings on a spring morning when he roused from a nightmare of the frigid Arctic and realized that a shaft of May sunlight had slipped through a half-opened curtain and nudged him awake by shining in his face. Think what he experienced when he opened his window to be greeted by a May morning ablaze with sunlit beauty, dancing daffodils, nodding tulips, and dew-freshened rosebuds bathing in the golden ambiance of the sun.

Adapted from Reflecting God, 5-6.

Fridtjof had broken through the deadness. The sun was no longer hidden in some far, far distant future, but a present blessing that provoked a dance of gratitude and joy.

Men and women come in many hues of black, white, and brown. They dress in styles ranging from tiara to baseball cap worn backward. They follow different vocations from sailors like Nansen to preachers like Billy Graham. They speak a thousand different languages and dialects when they order coffee or correct their children.

But the hungers of the heart are all inscribed on our inner being in the same languages, the same style, and

the same flavors and colors. Our Creator, who beckons us to wholeness and holiness, engraves them there.

And how our hearts long for wholeness, holiness, peace, forgiveness, and assurance that we belong. From time to time we glimpse the light, the very Light of God. At such times we spiritually discern that there is a relationship with God that promises fulfillments that we have only dreamed of. We savor the hungers of our heart for a precious moment. But although the wise man's words from Proverbs 4:23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence" (KJV), hover in our spirit, the vision is soon gone. Intrusions like overtime, Monday Night Football, ceramics class, family quarrels, soccer practice, and church committee meetings yank us back into a world as busy as a beehive and as stressful as a bomb squad's "to do" list. Yet the heart hungers on, longing for the Light. Like the memory of a guilty romance, our neglect of the spiritual Light nags our troubled soul.

Beware of Falling Idols

"When you cry out for help, let your collection of idols save you! The wind will carry them all of them off, a mere breath will blow them away" (Isa 57:13). Our age has found this verse to be precisely true. Falling idols crash all around us.

It's not that we haven't hoped—we used to do that. It's not like we haven't searched. We wore ourselves out chasing dreams, phantasms, and phony messiahs. Modernity has already crowned and impeached the old set of idols:

- Materialism—grab all the things you can.
- Hedonism—life is an end in itself and pleasure is preferable to pain.
- Narcissism—it's all about me!
- Scientism—the Scientific Method and its technology is my shepherd, I shall not want—I hope.
- Reason—the human mind can think its way to happiness.

We held coronation galas when these messiahs slouched into the modern Bethlehem. Modernity's manifesto declared human beings to be free from the supernatural, free to fashion their own "self," free to conquer nature through science, free to produce an always-growing economy. All this sprang from faith in the religion of human progress. But they were exposed as impotent saviors, every one of them. A pile of

money, nonstop pleasure, self-centered living, and science and technology still left that big hole in our heart empty and aching.

Oh, there are still tribes of greedy grabbers, pleasure hounds, egomaniacs, and science and technology worshipers. But they are old-fashioned, out of tune with the times.

The idols of modernity—materialism, hedonism, narcissism, scientism, and reason—became the establishment against which postmodern searchers have rebelled.

The Postmodern Search for Meaning

The inhabitants of the 21st century are done with mere rationality and empty tradition. They seek something beyond the natural, above the rational, something mysterious and beyond their control. “Our age . . . makes the materialism of the past look picayune. People crave something larger in concepts than the data of this world, something mysterious, ambiguous, nonmaterial.”

From Stanley Kauffman, The New Republic, Aug 30, 1999, 24.

Rita McClain’s pilgrimage speaks for the culture. Her spiritual search started in a Pentecostal church in Iowa, but the guilt was too heavy there. She packed her spiritual bags and moved to a mainline Protestant congregation, but it was too “shallow.” She rejected all organized religion and spent years seeking peace in nature, mainly hiking in the mountains and meditating in the desert. A painful divorce moved her to scout her “inner landscape” again. This expedition led her into Unity (a blend of Christian Science, Hinduism, and pop psychology). From there she journeyed into Native American spirituality and then she came to bow before the Buddha.

If you visited her home (as *Newsweek* did), you would find a truly postmodern altar. Currently it sports “an angel statute, a small bottle of ‘sacred water’ blessed at a women’s vigil, a crystal ball, a pyramid, a small brass image of Buddha sitting on a brass leaf, a votive candle, a Hebrew prayer, a tiny Native American basket from the 1850s, and a picture of her ‘most sacred place,’ a madrone tree near her home.”

From Newsweek, Nov. 28, 1994, 53.

Meet New York psychotherapist Nancy Santo Pietro. She has, it seems, all but abandoned her practice of traditional psychotherapy in favor of *feng shui* (“wind” and “water” in Chinese). *Feng shui* helps her patients find jobs, lovers, and other good things. To cure

From Stanley Grenz, *What Christians Really Believe and Why* Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1998, 2.

relationship problems Santo Pietro counsels: “hang a pink *shui* crystal on a nine-inch red string in your relationship corner.”

From *Macleans* Jan 1, 1996, 23.

Then there is Cara Seeger of Victoria, BC. She doesn’t go very many days without a magical ceremony of Wicca. She reads tarot cards, immerses herself in Taoism, and practices Buddhism. Like an echo of our pluralistic culture she says, “I believe all attempts of mankind and womankind to reach the divine are valid.”

Magazine reports from 2001.

Part of the postmodern search is the fever for chasing angels. *Time* magazine reports that Harvard Divinity School has a course on angels. Boston College has two. Recently, five of the top ten best-sellers among religious books, according to *Publishers Weekly*, were about angels. Even network television is aflutter with angels.

Eastern religions have seeped into the culture through songs and literature. Right and left people are turning to pre-Christian paganism such as Traditional African Religion and Druid practices. Much of it is subrational, id-level religion. Gut-level religion shows up in Christian circles too. Some believe the barking, laughing, roaring, and “giving birth in the Spirit” of practitioners of the Toronto Blessing and its split-offs are in this category. The postmodern spiritual vacuum fuels even the UFO craze.

Postmodern gurus, rebelling against vacuous secularism, seem to teach four doctrines.

1. Salvation will come from within you—not from some God or Savior “up there.” Books like *The Celestine Prophecy*, films like *The Color Purple*, and songs like Mariah Carey’s “Hero” teach this.
2. God is in everything and everything in the universe is connected—and thus good. As Agnes Sanford, a charismatic Episcopalian missionary, preached, “God is actually in the flowers and the growing grass and all the little, chirping, singing things. He made everything out of himself and then put a part of himself into everything.” Poet Lyn Emmanuel declares that “all is connected in the great seethe of seeing and being.” She declares that she is part of every “dog and hairpin,” of “sailors in undershirts” and “waitresses in Dacron,” of “junkyards” and “umbrellas.” The Bible declares that God is separate from, distinct from His creation.

From Grenz, 73.

Best American Poetry 2000, *New York: Scribners, 2000*, 62-63.

3. We are virtual gods, evolving toward divinity as taught by a host of swamis and New Age scribes.
4. Our destiny is to escape conscious personhood. We will rise above the strife and suffering of this life only when we lose personal consciousness and become absorbed into Nirvana, the great impersonal oversoul of the universe. Then our personal identity will get lost like a drop of water flicked into the ocean.

After wringing the juice out of secularism, materialism, and scientism our culture booted them out along with traditional Christianity that they saw as modernity's lackey. Now the god-rush is on. Grabbing for gurus, chasing angels, signing up for New Age seminars, gasping for UFOs the cultural search for spirituality pants on. Spirituality, any spirituality will do, it seems. But more and more there is disappointment and despair as one after another of the new idols crash like a dropping lightbulb on a cement floor.

In these days of confused and frantic longing for God, gods, some god, any god, despair has a dark undertow. When their idol washes away like a sand castle at high tide, some turn cynical. Others hop quickly to another myth. The crash of idols sends some people retreating within to create a safe world of their own the way Deborah did in Hannah Green's autobiographical novel, *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*. Others "flock to psychotherapists or their substitutes, to drugs or cults to get help in holding themselves together."

From Rollo May, *The Cry for Myth*
(New York: W. W. Norton, 1991),
16.

The experiment of the human race as *homo autonomus* has failed. The despair is so dark that some lose the will to go on. Right now the leading cause of death among North American teens is not AIDS, not drugs, not gang violence, not car crashes, but suicide.

Three 18-year-old boys drove a 1987 Plymouth across Canada. Their journey ended in a garage at the Mini Storage in Vancouver, BC. They closed the garage door with the engine running, put an album by Kurt Cobain's band Nirvana in the cassette player, and died in minutes. They left a 60-page suicide journal titled "The Last Trip." On the last page they wrote: "We have lived our lives and this life is not for us—goodbye." When idols fall, people who trusted in them may go down with them.

The Vancouver Sun, Oct. 20, 1994,
B4, cited by Grenz.

Discussion: The Sound of Crashing Idols

(15 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 2-3.

Here is a chance to use a simple Jigsaw Method that will help you process the material more quickly. Assign Base Groups to work on just two of the six categories.

Since you brought plenty of magazines and newspapers to class for the montage exercise, they can be used as resources for this exercise too.

In the modern period (Renaissance until the late 20th century) the people chased a cluster of “messiahs.” Though some had intrinsic value, they all turned out to be poor saviors. We have big words for these false saviors who still seduce many. Consider the fallen idols of modernity. Review today’s lecture, then look in today’s newspaper or recall the telecast news and search your own experience and observations for examples of each.

Materialism: The greed for things, money, and possessions. Those who grabbed a pile of money now know that riches do not heal the soul.

Narcissism: Self-centeredness. Selfish living never made anyone happy for more than a week.

Hedonism: Living for physical pleasure. Constant pleasure (gluttony, sex, drugs) ends in boredom and has awful consequences.

Scientism: Making science the be-all and end-all of life. As good as science and technology, have been they do not satisfy the hunger for God.

Reason: The belief that reality is logical. If it makes sense, do it. This fails to comprehend the spiritual that is sometimes above rationality.

New Age Searching: Eastern religions, New Age seminars, pre-Christian paganism, angel mania, Id-level Christianity, UFO and conspiracy cults, etc.

Call for each group to share with the whole class the one most powerful or distinct example found in their search.

The Two-Minute Paper

(10 minutes)

This activity will serve as the summary of today’s work. Though the papers you collect will be unrefined, they will give you an idea of the quality of the communication and learning in this lesson. Also, it will help you see how students are assimilating the content and the objectives.

The human race today is unholy and unhappy, lost and longing. Think back over the learning activities of today and write a two-minute paper. Your paper will be handed in to the learning leader in whatever state it is in at the end of the two-minute writing period. Your topic is “Who Needs Transformation, Anyway?”

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Read aloud several of the "Two-Minute Papers" as a way to review today's lesson.

Look Ahead

In the next lesson we will explore the questions:

- Who Am I?
- Why Am I Here?
- What Am I Searching For?

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Student Guide.

Bible Study

- Read the first 11 chapters of Genesis.
- Memorize 2 Corinthians 3: 18.

Reading

If the book *Reflecting God* is available to you, read chapters 2 and 3. Also, check out pages 15-22 of the *Reflecting God Workbook*.

Journal Prompts

- In your spiritual life journal respond to this: If I was going to use two of the anecdotes, quotations, or ideas from today's lesson in a sermon I would select . . .
- Record your reflections about new things you learned today about two or three of your classmates. Write a one-sentence prayer for each of them.

Punctuate the Finish

Refer students to Resource 2-4.

Augustine, the blatant sinner turned saint, left this prayer in his *Confessions*. Make it your own today.

"Too late I loved you, O Beauty of ancient days, yet ever new! Too late I loved you . . . You called and shouted and burst my deafness. You flashed, shone and scattered my blindness. I . . . pant for you. I taste and hunger and thirst. You touched me, and I burned for your peace . . . Lord, have pity on me . . . I hide not my wounds; you are the Physician, I the sick . . . all my hope is . . . in your exceeding great mercy."

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Lesson 3

Three Key Questions

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide Wall Posters of the 3 Questions of the Day
0:10	Into the Word	Bible Study	Resource 3-1
0:30	Who Am I?	Lecture, Discussion	Resource 3-2
0:55	What Am I Searching For?	Literature Analysis	Resource 3-3
1:10	Why Am I Here?	Lecture	Resource 3-4
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Resource 3-5

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

Stanley J. Grenz, *What Christians Really Believe and Why* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 21-44, 112-136.

J. Kenneth Grider, *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 236-241.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), chapters 2–3.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 15-22.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- explore biblical and theological answers to the questions of human identity, purpose, and longing as they relate to spiritual formation foundations
- experience and embrace light on one's own personal search for meaning, identity, and purpose
- act on insights regarding the ways that human purpose, identity, and meaning affect personal spiritual growth and to apply such insights to the student's own ministry

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Bible study
Journaling

Assign for next lesson

Bible Study

After careful personal study of Genesis 3 and Psalm 51, get together with someone for at least 30 minutes to talk about the meaning of these Bible passages. Your study partner may be a member of the class or someone else.

The Sin Collection

From your perusal of news media, reading, or personal experience and observation, collect at least six examples of how sin darkens lives today. Be prepared to share at the beginning of next session.

A One-Page Philosophy of Life

Write 300 words, due at the beginning of the next class, that answer the three questions:

1. Who am I?
2. Why am I here?
3. What am I searching for?

Journal Prompt

Write about the Rebecca Thompson case. See Resource 3-5.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on two of the students to recite 2 Corinthians 3:18.

Call on one other student to state one new insight gained from the reading of Genesis 1–11.

Motivator

*The Rebecca Thompson story is based on eight newspaper articles that appeared in the Casper (Wyoming) Star-Tribune. A longer version of it is found in *Reflecting God*, pages 19-20. A shorter version may be found in *Max Lucado's He Still Moves Stones* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1993), 23-24.*

Rebecca Thompson looks at the North Platte River flowing 112 feet below in the rocky gorge beneath the Fremont Canyon Bridge near Casper, WY. She gazes at the rocks and the water and begins to cry.

She tells her friend who is holding Rebecca's two-year-old daughter she has been here before, 19 years before when she was just 18. Rebecca sobs out the story.

On that awful night she and her 11-year-old sister, Amy, went to a convenience store in Casper to buy potato chips and Cokes. When they came out someone had slashed a tire on their car with a knife. Rebecca went back into the store, phoned her mom and told her that two nice men were going to help them get the tire fixed.

But instead of helping, Jerry Lee Jenkins and Ronald Leroy Kennedy grabbed them and hauled them off in their car to the Fremont Canyon Bridge 40 miles away. When they found that lonely bridge on that dark night, the two men took turns beating and raping Rebecca. Her face was pulp. Somehow Rebecca was able to beg them not to do the same to her horrified little sister. They didn't. They just threw her off the bridge. She hit a boulder at the river's edge 112 feet below and died instantly.

Their lust sated, the rapists threw Rebecca off the bridge too. She hit a ledge then bounced into the water with her hip broken in five places. She drug herself ashore, hovered between two big rocks, and shivered through the long night. A man and his wife on a fishing trip found Rebecca about 10 AM the next day.

The doctors at the Casper hospital set her broken bones by surgery and pins and a body caste. But they could not heal her mind and spirit. They could not bring her little sister back. They could not stop the nightmares. Rebecca couldn't either.

The police caught Kennedy and Jenkins. Rebecca testified against them, pointed them out in open court. She had to describe the details of that horrific attack. What shame. Everyone now knew of her violation, her humiliation. What shame!

One of the killers taunted her right there in the courtroom by smirking and sliding his finger across his throat in a slashing motion.

The jury sentenced Kennedy and Jenkins to death. But the U.S. Supreme Court overruled the death penalty. "Life in prison with the possibility of parole." That's what the Supreme Court said.

The murdering rapists appealed for a new trial on the basis that their defense lawyer didn't really want to get them off. Would they get out and carry out the threat they made to Rebecca in court?

Their appeal was rejected, but as soon as they were eligible Jenkins and Kennedy began to apply for parole. Twice every year they applied. So every six months Rebecca had to go back to court and relive that shameful experience. Year after year she recited her shame.

As time went by she had not been assaulted just once but repeatedly. Every time a nightmare woke her up, every time she thought of her dead sister, every time she had to testify again at a parole hearing, the shame of it all came back. Every time she walked down the street, she lived it again as people on the street whispered.

Rebecca could not find the light after that dark night. She lived in the shadows of her guilt (for getting her little sister killed), her anger—rage at the monsters who had killed her sister and mutilated her body and spirit. Anger at whatever God there might be who let such evil things happen. And the humiliation, the shame—that was the worst of all. The shame, the eternal shame. Every holiday was mutely celebrated in the shadow of that reality. Every morning, afternoon, evening came and went under that cloud of shame.

“So why after 19 years did you want to come back here to the Fremont Canyon Bridge, Rebecca?”

Rebecca is weeping, out of control now.

Her friend does not want the two-year-old to see her mom like this, so she turns to take the baby back to the car.

That’s when he heard her body hit the water 112 feet below in the bottom of the canyon. The Fremont Canyon Bridge claimed Rebecca Thompson one final time.

Orientation

Put these three questions on the bulletin board, or chalkboard or make wall posters of them.

What was Rebecca Thompson's philosophy of life? That is, how did this tragic woman answer life's basic questions? "Who am I?" Why am I here?" What am I searching for?"

Surely a sense of eternal shame is twisted into her answers to all these questions. Today Rebecca helps us launch our own exploration into the questions of human identity, purpose, and meaning. We start with Rebecca, move to the Bible, then to the Christian faith, and finally into our own hearts and ministries.

Learner Objectives

Direct students to the Student Guide.

To help students

- explore Biblical and theological answers to the questions of human identity, purpose, and longing as they relate to spiritual formation foundations
- experience and embrace light on one’s own personal search for meaning, identity and purpose
- act on insights regarding the ways that human purpose, identity and meaning affect personal spiritual growth and to apply such insights to the student’s own ministry

Lesson Body

Bible Study

(20 minutes)

Any of today's learning activities can take more time than that allotted in this guide. If participation is eager and profitable, you may wish to spend more time on a particular exercise and limit or omit another one. Or, if you can extend your session to 120 minutes rather than the regular 90 minutes, you should have time for all activities.

Refer students to Resource 3-1.

Since the students have studied Genesis 1—11 as homework, they should be able to move promptly through steps 1 and 2.

In search of the answers to today's three questions, we turn to the Bible.

Step 1: Working individually, study Genesis chapters 1 and 2 noting any statements, indications, or hints having to do with these questions: Who am I? Why am I here? What am I searching for?

Step 2: Join your Base Group members to share and consolidate your discoveries.

Step 3: Working as a group, examine these scriptures for answers to the three questions of the day:

Hebrews 2:6-8
Deuteronomy 28:65
Isaiah 26:8-9
1 John 3:1-2

Depending on time available, call on each Base Group to answer one of the three questions of the day.

Step 4: Be prepared to share with the class your group's best brief answers to the questions based on your study of these scriptures.

Who Am I?

(25 minutes)

Arthur Schopenhauer, German philosopher, was strolling down the street pondering the mystery of human destiny. Lost in thought, he awkwardly bumped into a man, nearly knocking him down. The angry pedestrian snarled at Schopenhauer, "Who do you think you are?"

"I wish I knew," Schopenhauer replied.

From Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* to Alex Haley's *Roots* literature has recorded our search to solve the riddle of personal identity. From the wanderings of Odysseus to the birth-mother search of the adoptee next door we have sought to answer "Who am I?"

Some would ask . . .

Display and refer students to Resource 3-2.

Are you an animal?

Some scholars say that you are a beast—perhaps the best of the beasts, but still a beast. Hamsters, horses, humans are all chained to the same drives and behavior patterns—or so say the sociobiologists.

Wes Tracy heard Joe Bayley, a giant among Christian publishers and editors a generation ago, tell of an encounter at the doctor's office. Joe's faith survived the tragic loss of two sons. He was taking his dying boy for one more treatment. While in the waiting room he met a mother whose son was also dying. Joe spoke words of comfort and inspiration about meeting her son in heaven. But this woman had bought the "animal" definition of human beings. She would have nothing to do with God and heavenly reunions.

From Reflecting God, 21.

"Listen, Mister," she said, "sometime in the next month my son will die. Then we will put his body in a box, dig a hole in the ground, and cover him up with dirt. That will be the end of that."

Are you a cipher, a zero?

Some declare that all this searching for a deeper identity is beside the point. You are born to die, and your pathetic little life has no meaning. Hugh Hefner, of *Playboy* fame, states proudly that life is an end in itself and pleasure is preferable to pain, so grab all the pleasure you can get.

Some have a different, though just as pessimistic, philosophy. An ancient king demanded that his wisest man tell him the entire history of the human race. The scholar came back after months of study and said, "The history of the human race is: They were born, they suffered, they died." Is suffering or pleasure all there is to your existence?

Are you a human computer?

Some thinkers claim that you are a complex and intelligent machine. Theologian Stanley J. Grenz points out that the *Star Trek* series "moves a giant step

beyond the wedding of brain and computer chip to the humanization of the computer itself” (25). The 1999 film *Matrix* goes even farther. Personified Artificial Intelligence (AI) enslaves the human race, drawing its existence from the very life of humans. So, does your upgraded computer look like a portrait of you, the real you?

Are you an immortal soul?

Careful—think before you answer. Part of you, but only part of you, may be described as “immortal soul.” Those who use this phrase to define you also act as if the immaterial part of our being is all that counts. The body is just the prison house of the soul. Shirley MacLaine, in one of her out-of-body experiences, said, “I now understood how irrelevant my physical body was.” One day your immortal soul will shed this body and fly free, and you can then become your true self. You hear this kind of talk at funerals a lot. But it is sub-Christian.

From Grenz, 28.

This notion that death is a doorway to eternal bliss conjures scary implications. Is suicide the route to trouble-free happiness? This idea also is in harmony with the reincarnation doctrine that our true humanness resides in some mysterious spiritual element called the soul. This notion is at least as old as Plato and several ancient Eastern religions that have found their way into the bloodstream of our cultural mind. But the popularity of this presumption does not change the Bible teaching that you and I are embodied creatures. And we will be embodied beings throughout eternity—just as, many believe, Jesus will be.

From Reflecting God, 21-22.

Another thing that is sub-Christian about defining yourself as an immortal soul is that it reveals the idea that immortality is something that we have or are, something that we possess. “There is nothing within us that is intrinsically immortal. . . . We simply don’t have within ourselves the power to live forever.” Eternal life, all life, is something we receive, not something we are. It is a gift of God.

From Grenz, 27.

Are you a “godling”?

Some gurus tell us that we are virtual gods. John Denver said in a radio interview, “I’m making progress. I’m getting better and better. Someday I’ll be a god.” Sadly, he became an air crash victim before he could claim godhood. Carol Riddell challenges us all to transcend our status as primitive *Homo sapiens* and join her in becoming *Homo divinus*.

From Grenz, 102.

A host of others, some within the Christian community itself, urge us to discover God within. They echo the notions of *The Aquarian Gospel* and its heresy “all things are God; all things are one.” Such teachings sound so warm and cozy that it is hard to examine them critically. But many who do find them at odds with the Christian faith.

From J. Richard Middleton and Brian J. Walsh, *Truth Is Stranger than It Used to Be* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 123.

In a hundred examples the Bible shows that God is distinct from and above all created things and beings. In fact, while bearing the image of God, we are “fundamentally one with all that is not God, whether trees, galaxies, animals or the earth. Indeed, our solidarity with the non-human realm is indicated by our creation along with other land animals on the sixth day [Genesis 1:24-30] and our sharing the same food with them.”

The Christian View Says . . .

So if you are not an animal, a sophisticated computer, an immortal soul, or a godling, what do you say when the voice calls “Produce your I.D.?”

You are an embodied person created by God and in the very image of God. (Gen 1:27).

From J. Kenneth Grider, *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 237.

The Lord arranged it that when Adam and Eve produced offspring the image of God was passed on to all generations. Echoes of God’s own image include our ability to love. Some theologians say that the main element in the divine image of God in mankind (*imago Dei*) is our capacity to love—especially love expressed in our maleness and femaleness. This includes marriage but is not confined to things marital. Echoes of God’s image are also seen to rise above self-centeredness, to reason, to make moral decisions. Even animals make decisions, you say. True, but they do not make moral decisions. Dying for the faith as a martyr “is a human capacity that expresses dramatically the image of God in persons.”

This divine image within is often what those who teach us to look for God within ourselves are talking about. There is something Godlike within the human heart, something positive, something that can be counted on to work for good and wholeness, to transcend self, to love, to reason, to make moral choices.

You are the object of God's love.

From A Gentle Thunder (Dallas: Word, 1995), 122.

Max Lucado put it this way, "If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If He had a wallet, your photo would be in it. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning. Whenever you want to talk He'll listen. And the Christmas gift He sent you in Bethlehem? Face it, friend. He's crazy about you." The Bible reveals the lengths to which God will go to express His love for you. The suffering of Christ is the supreme example. "Perhaps a good Christian response to Descartes's dictum *cogito ergo sum*, I think, therefore I am, is *sum amatus ergo sum*, I am loved, therefore I am."

From Middleton and Walsh, 149.

You are a unity of body, soul, spirit, mind, and heart.

From Grider, 241.

Some say we are body and spirit. Others say we are body, soul, and spirit. Nazarene theologian J. Kenneth Grider writes that both views are incomplete. Though spirit and soul can be distinguished according to Scripture, the person is a complex unitary being made up of body, soul, spirit, heart, and mind.

You are a person who is free and responsible.

Though marked by sin and a member of a fallen race, God has graciously given you the ability to choose God and good. We call this prevenient grace.

From Works, 6:311.

You are not free to choose your parents, your birthday, or your mental capacity. But you are able, in spite of sin, to choose God and good. But even this ability is the gift of God. John Wesley wrote, "He [God] made you free agents; having an inward power of self-determination, which is essential to your nature. And He deals with you as free agents from first to last."

Environment influences you, but because of prevenient grace it does not have the last word. Some teach that whether you are a missionary or a murderer you should not be praised or blamed because you are merely what society (environment) made of you. But this is not the picture of humankind that the Bible or experience reveals. You are given the capacity to choose, and you are held responsible for your choice. You cast the deciding vote in choosing good or evil.

For Discussion: Multiple-Choice Quiz

Use this exercise to emphasize and summarize the content of the lecture. Select for discussion, from among the multiple-choice questions created by the students, the ones that focus on the main points you want to get across.

If time is short, this can be a homework assignment.

Write three multiple-choice questions based on the lecture for the class to answer and discuss. Work in Base Groups or study pairs. Compare questions and answers.

What Am I Searching For?

(15 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 3-3.

Jigsaw this exercise by having each Base Group work on just one of the three excerpts. Share results with the whole class.

Point of the story: *Even the best educated among us longs for something. For God?*

Point of the story: *The more we reach for what we think we want, the emptier we feel. Our attempts to save ourselves are usually about as smart as breaking in to prison. Have you ever broken in to a homemade jail?*

Point of the story: *More than a longing, our hunger for God is a desperate need.*

The Longing Heart

Read these three excerpts. Then discuss them and try to reduce what each one teaches into a one-sentence poster or bumper sticker.

Excerpt 1: Graduation, Stanford University—a student speaker addressed the celebrating crowd describing his class as not having any idea how “it relates to the past or the future, having little sense of the present, no life-sustaining beliefs, secular or religious” and consequently having “no goal and no path . . .” (from, Rollo May, *The Cry for Myth* [New York: Norton, 1991], 21).

Excerpt 2: Everywhere you see people lost, lonely, hungry, and searching for something. Confusing as this life is, they often do something as dumb as the three car thieves in Larkspur, CA, who tried to steal a pickup truck. The owner saw them and chased them yelling. He hailed a policeman and he too gave chase. The thieves made a valiant effort to escape. They scrambled over a tall fence with barbed wire ripping their pants and scratching the blood out of their shins. But it was worth it. The rotund truck owner and the middle-aged cop could never scale a fence like that.

They didn’t have to.

The cop looked through the wires and said, “Congratulations, men. You just broke into San Quentin!” (*Homiletics*, Nov./Dec. 1995, 63).

Excerpt 3: Douglas Coupland is on to something. This man who coined the term Generation X wrote in *Life After God* ([New York: Pocket Books, 1994], 359). “My secret is that I need God—that I am sick and can no

longer make it alone. I need God to help me give, because I can no longer . . . be . . . giving; to help me be kind, as I no longer seem capable of kindness; to help me love, as I seem beyond being able to love.”

Lecture: Why Am I Here?

(10 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 3-4.

This lecture is based largely upon the last section of chapter 3 in Reflecting God.

When the new millennium arrived people were still asking “Why am I here?” The recent film *Dogma* (a combination of sacrilege and comedy) ends with the main character asking God “Why are we here?” God, played by pop singer Alanis Morissette, just grins, tweaks the questioner’s nose, and disappears. Is existence a joke? Our purpose a mystery?

Does God even know why we are here? Joan Osborne’s hit song pictures us as passengers on a bus headed nowhere. Then it poses the haunting idea that perhaps God is also on the bus as *One of Us* helplessly hurtling on to oblivion.

But in your heart of hearts you know there is a purpose to life. We find that intuition confirmed in the Bible.

The Bible says that the Lord put us in authority over the earth.

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image . . . and let them rule over . . . all the creatures’ ” (Gen 1:26). We are part of creation, and we are to be caretakers of the earth. Christians sometimes develop an antinature bias that regards nature as something to be exploited and used up. We must realize that creation is more than our plaything. It is God’s handiwork. Psalm 8:6 says “You made him [humankind] ruler over the works of your hands.”

Another part of our purpose is to develop a godly community of faith.

From John Knox Press, 1989, 55.

Maria Harris had a point when she wrote, in *Fashion Me a People*, “A solitary Christian is no Christian. We come to God together, or we do not come at all.” The church, the family of faith, is to reflect the Trinity. The three-in-one God models the perfect community, and Christians on earth are to echo that ideal community.

The genius of the early Wesleyan movement was the community achieved in the face-to-face groups. They discovered for themselves the wisdom of the New Testament, which urges the “bearing of one another’s

From J. I. Packer, ed., Exploring the Christian Faith (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 267.

burdens, of confronting, correcting, encouraging, exhorting, comforting and edifying one another; of provoking one another to love and good works, of confessing our faults to one another; of weeping with those who weep and rejoicing with those who rejoice; of sharing . . . the same love and unity that Jesus shares with his Father.”

We are here to reflect the image of God.

Some kings in ancient times left images of themselves in the parts of their kingdom where they could not often be in person. Likewise, God placed you and me on earth to represent our King and Creator. We are to mirror the Lord’s character in our world.

That is why we must stand with unveiled faces beholding the glory of the Lord as in a mirror. Thus, we will be transformed more and more into His image as 2 Corinthians 3: 18 teaches.

You are God’s poem.

Ephesians 2: 10 tells us “We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” The basic Greek word translated “workmanship” is *poema*. Our word “poem” comes from that ancient term. Think about it; you are God’s poem! His work of art. His masterpiece. God is writing a poem in and through your life!

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Three questions basic to spiritual formation were raised today: Who am I? What am I searching for? Why am I here?

You are an embodied person created in the image of God. You are hungering for a vital, real, and intimate relationship with God. There is a God-shaped vacuum within that waits to be filled with the love and fellowship of the Spirit. And you are here on earth to reflect the image of God the way a work of art reflects the heart of its creator. Your destiny is not absorption into some impersonal Nirvana, but full community with the God who invites us to the heaven He has prepared for those who wear the signet ring of faith in His Son Jesus Christ.

Now there's a calling for you. Much more lofty than the "divine" tweaking of the nose in *Dogma*. Much more meaningful than the bleak Fremont Canyon Bridge that shut out the light for Rebecca Thompson. Ponder St. Paul's plea in Ephesians 4:1. "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received."

Look Ahead

If I am a person created in God's image, designed for the noble purpose of reflecting God's image, and if I really do long for God, then why is life so miserable?

The answer to that started in Genesis 3 and continues in today's news reports. It is the problem of sin.

Assign Homework

Refer students to the Student Guide.

Bible Study

After careful personal study of Genesis 3 and Psalm 51, get together with someone for at least 30 minutes to talk about the meaning of these Bible passages. Your study partner may be a member of the class or someone else.

The Sin Collection

From your perusal of news media, reading, or personal experience and observation, collect at least six examples of how sin darkens lives today. Be prepared to share these in the next lesson.

Journal Prompt

Write about the Rebecca Thompson case. See Resource 3-5.

Punctuate the Finish

Point this finish to the ministry opportunities that your students have.

If time permits, let students pick one or two of the sentence starters (Resource 3-5) to complete in class today. Ask for volunteer sharing. You may want to warn against using proper names in discussing item 7.

If Rebecca Thompson had only known that she was so much more than her shame. But she didn't know.

There are Fremont Canyon Bridges all over the landscape. And "Reberras" in every town, every street. Women and men acquainted with humiliation, violation, shame. They think they know who they are. Each thinks his or her name is spelled Worthless, Stained, Hopeless, Humiliated, Violated, Shamed.

Benediction: "What is man that you are mindful of him . . . You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet" (Heb 2:6-8).

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Lesson 4

Devastated by Sin

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Origin and Reality of Sin	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 4-1
0:30	Words for Sin in the Scriptures	Bible Study	Resource 4-2
0:50	Sin and Spiritual Formation	Lecture/Response	
1:15	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Resource 4-3

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988), 275-301.

Mel Lawrenz, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), chapter 3: "War Against the Soul: Sin as Deformation," 47-55.

Morris Weigelt, et al., *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), chapter 2: "Sabotaged by Sin," 25-33.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), chapter 4, "What Went Wrong, Anyway?" 31-37.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 23-29.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- understand the biblical and Christian doctrine of sin, especially its significance for spiritual formation and holy living
- embrace the Christian doctrine of sin, especially the insight that no spiritual development can occur by mere human effort—in their heart of hearts students will feel that without the converting grace of God the spiritual disciplines are empty habits
- acknowledge the devastation of sin in their past, confess and forsake any known sin of the present, and praise God for His deliverance thus far

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Bible study
The sin collection
Journaling

Assign for next lesson

This assignment prepares students for Lesson 5.

Bible Study: What Is God Like?

Study the following passages and list all you learn about the nature and person of God. Be prepared to hand in your list.

- 1 Peter 1:16
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-5
- 1 John 4:16, 19
- 2 Corinthians 13:14
- Colossians 1:16
- Genesis 17:1
- Revelation 22:17
- John 3:16

Complete Resource 4-3: “The Problem of Sin.” This assignment extends today’s lesson into the days ahead.

Journal Prompt: Three key words to make part of your journal experience:

- *Acknowledge* that sin has had devastating effects in your own life, family, and world.
- *Confess* any known sins in your present life—and, by God’s grace, forsake them at once.
- *Praise* God for past and present forgiveness for sin and for cleansing your heart.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on two of the students to read their one-page Philosophy of Life.

Collect the homework. Critique the homework and return to students next lesson.

Motivator

This story of "The Tiger and the Goats" is a living classic. It can be found in many places including the following sources: The Magnificent Defeat by Frederick Buechner (Harper & Row, 1985), 90-95; Herald of Holiness, April, 1996,2; Reflecting God, Wes Tracy, et al. (Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2000), 32-33.

Stories are such good teaching tools because they usually mean more than they say and they can be interpreted on more than one level. If you wish, devise a few starter questions about the story of "The Tiger and the Goats" and see what truths or guidance your students see in it.

The Tiger and the Goats

Out of ancient India comes a fable about a motherless tiger cub. The orphaned beast was adopted by goats that taught him to bleat and eat grass. Indeed, the cub thought he was a goat.

One day a king tiger came along. The goats scattered in fear. But the cub, fascinated by the tiger, stayed behind, afraid, yet not afraid. The tiger asked the cub why in the world he was acting like a goat. The confused cub could only bleat nervously—he couldn't even talk tiger—and continued to nibble grass.

The king tiger picked up the cub and carried him to the edge of a clear lake. He made the cub look at their two images reflected in the water. The tiger thought that the little fellow would make his own correct conclusions, but the cub just kept on bleating like a goat.

Next, the king tiger made the cub eat raw meat. At first he couldn't stand it, but as he ate more and felt it warming his blood, the truth about what he really was became clear to him. Lashing his tail and digging his claws into the earth, the young beast raised his head high, and the jungle trembled at his exultant roar.

In India the tiger represents all that is strong, graceful, and noble in life. We were created for the noble, lofty, and holy life—but because of sin we live like goats. Alienated from our best selves we struggle along failing and falling even when we aim high. God has planted His image within us. It guides, goads, and woos us toward God and good.

From T. S. Eliot, Ash Wednesday.

If one never discovers his or her tigerhood, it becomes easier to be content with goathood. But as God would have it, “In the juvenescence of the year comes Christ the Tiger.” Once we have discovered the tiger within or encountered “Christ the Tiger” our goathood becomes a problem. How can you live like a goat in the light of God’s blazing holiness?

Some goats crucify the Tiger to escape His gaze and call. Others claim that tigerhood is just an illusion, forget it. The best we can do is to become a well-adjusted goat. Others advise us not to think about our goatness. If the smell gets bad, just air out the place. Stay busy, work two jobs, keep the TV blaring. Don’t give yourself a chance to contemplate your goathood. Moralists try to housebreak the goat. Make it a good moral goat. This kind of “grass” also fails to fill the aching spiritual void within.

We were created in the image of God, to serve Him and one another in love. Yet we have crowned self as god. Like Adam we have all lost paradise, but we carry paradise around inside as a longing for a blessedness that is no more but that can, we hope, someday be again. But our sin-damaged lives show that we cannot save ourselves. Only Jesus Christ has the power to turn goats into tigers.

Orientation

We, the very ones intended to reflect God’s image in this world, so often end up unholy and unhappy.

“Me? God’s work of art! God’s poem? Surely you jest.”

“Mirror God to the world? Are you kidding? I am so lost I wonder if I will ever find my way. The more I try the worse I get. I am ashamed of what I do and even more ashamed of what I want to do.”

“Aglow with the Spirit? (Rom 12: 11, RSV), Peaceful? Calm? My heart is more like a traffic jam on a hot day. If I am supposed to reflect the image of God, if I was meant for a holy, intimate walk with God, something has gone terribly wrong.”

You are right. Something has gone wrong with the human enterprise. Today we study something that we all have firsthand knowledge of—sin.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- understand the biblical and Christian doctrine of sin, especially its significance for spiritual formation and holy living
- embrace the Christian doctrine of sin, especially the insight that no spiritual development can occur by mere human effort—in their heart of hearts students will feel that without the converting grace of God the spiritual disciplines are empty habits
- acknowledge the devastation of sin in their past, confess and forsake any known sin of the present, and praise God for His deliverance thus far

Lesson Body

Lecture: The Origin and Reality of Sin

(20 minutes)

“The fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom” (Gen 3:6).

Refer students to Resource 4-1.

The first eleven chapters of your Bible apply the ancient wisdom to the great human questions: Where did we come from? Who are we? Why are we here? Genesis 3 answers the question “Why is there so much sin and misery in the world?”

Adam and Eve, our first parents, were deceived in the Garden of Eden where they lived in holy and happy relationship with God, each other, and creation. But the “serpent” convinced them that God was handing out commands—“Don’t touch that tree!”—because He was maliciously reserving certain beneficial things for himself. The “deprived” pair took steps (or bites) to grab their fair share. They yearned to be like God, and they crowned themselves gods.

See Romans 5: 12-14.

That first sin plunged humanity into sin. Adam and Eve bequeathed to all their descendants a tainted world, a fragmented nature, and a propensity to follow selfishness rather than God and good. Since that day we no longer experience God, creation, and others as friends. Something holy and sacred was surely lost.

The living portrait of sin emerges from that ancient and yet ever so modern story. The problem began with unbelief. That is to say, with distrust or “unfaith” in God’s goodness. How could God really have my best interest at heart and deprive me of that fine fruit that is so good for food, so pleasing to the eye, and so desirable for gaining wisdom? (Gen 3:6).

Pride or egocentricity also struts like a drum major through the story of the first sin. Eager to claim everything that God had, they exalted themselves to the control tower of their own beings. Egocentricity expressed as *self-idolatry* is the very nature of sin—theirs and ours. Sinful selfishness is crowned king of the heart. Self-gratification prowls the slums of the soul, dragging what was meant to be holy into the dens of sin and sensuality.

The third intrinsic element in sin is *disobedience*. Eve and Adam put their distrust and egocentric longings into action and deliberately disobeyed God. They destroyed their relationship with God, creation, and each other. From that day until the most recent tick of the clock on your wall, sin has hounded human life on earth. How strangely up to date is this description from John Wesley more than 200 years ago.

From Works, 6:223.

Open your eyes! Look around you! See darkness that may be felt; see ignorance and error; see vice in ten thousand forms; see . . . guilt, fear, sorrow, shame, remorse, covering the face of the earth! See misery the daughter of sin. See on every side, sickness and pain . . . driving on the poor, helpless sons of men, in every age, to the gates of death.

Is That Fair?

“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way” (Isa 53:6).

It doesn't seem fair that I should suffer because of the dumb mistakes of Adam and Eve back at the dawn of human history. I mean, I wasn't even there. How can I be held responsible for their antics?

Ever since (and even before) Pelagius and Augustine squared off about this subject, theologians have debated the whys and wherefores of sin that universally imprisons every generation. Not all the issues have been settled. But before you start pointing fingers and protesting too loudly, remember one thing. The story of Adam and Eve is your story. My story too. They not only preceded us, they represented us.

You and I have repeated the exact sins of Adam and Eve. You and I have destroyed our intended destiny of holiness and happiness in close relationship with God. Unbelief, distrust, pride, selfishness, disobedience—every one of them have lounged at your table and laughed at your jokes. You have often ordered them to stay out of sight in the basement of your heart. But the gang downstairs is a disorderly bunch. They threaten to make a scene at any moment. Don't you wish you could control them? Some days you wonder if they actually may be in charge of your whole house.

Sinners can quickly become like the demoniac of Gadera (Mark 5) who was controlled by forces stronger than he. Ask anyone who has fought addiction to alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or sexual perversion. Sexual appetites, John Wesley observed, “lead [a person]

From Sermons on Several Occasions (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, n.d.), 629.

captive: they drag him to and fro, in spite of his boasted reason, good breeding, and other accomplishments [the man] has no preeminence over the goat.”

From The Upward Call, 30.

Morris Weigelt declares that the sinful self is not only unwilling to submit to the rule of God but also incapable of submitting to the will of God. The harder we try, the more we fail. John Wesley wrote, “but though he strive with all his might he cannot conquer, sin is mightier than he. . . . He resolves against it, but yet sins on: He sees the snare and abhors [it] and runs into it!”

From Sermons on Several Occasions, 115.

Use your own illustration here if possible.

I’ll call her Marcia. She has a husband and a one-year-old son at home. But that did not stop her from going on a three-day binge just 13 days ago. She ran out of money after a day or so of drinking and shooting up, so she sold her engagement and wedding rings in order to buy one more packet of cocaine. Before the weekend was over she landed in police custody. On Monday she sat between her husband and her mother as they drove her to the Johnson County, Kansas, detox unit. Marcia cried and cried. Over and over she kept saying the same thing, “I don’t want to be this way, Mama. I don’t want to be this way.”

From Reflecting God, 35.

Sin touches every part of our being. That prompts theologians to talk about “total depravity.” An ancient Yoruba (Nigerian) proverbial greeting goes, “May your secret never be discovered.” But our secret is out, yours and mine. We have destroyed our relationship with others, with creation, with God, and with our own best self through sin—not Adam’s sin, ours. The Bible tells our secret: our foolish hearts are darkened (Rom 1:21), our minds corrupted, and we have made God our enemy (1 Tim 6:5; Rom 8:7-8). Jesus tells our secret too. He said that we love darkness better than light. We are drawn to the Light—not to embrace it, but to smash it, to kill it for the Light exposes our wickedness.

St. Paul describes the pervasiveness of sin:
They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God’s . . . decree. . . they . . . continue to do these very things . . .” (Rom 1:29-31).

This Lecture is based on pages 33-36 of Reflecting God.

If time permits, let students share in small groups their thoughts from Resource 4-1.

Bible Study

(20 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 4-2.

Use a simple Jigsaw Method that will help you process the material more quickly. Assign half of your Base Groups to work on the Old Testament (Hebrew words) and half to work on the New Testament (Greek) words.

The chart containing all the terms, meanings, and references are in Resource 4-2 of the Student Guide.

Some say that universal sin is the most empirically verifiable of all the Christian doctrines. What dominant solidarity or commonality do we all share—sin!

Words for Sin in the Scriptures

Examine the following Hebrew and Greek Bible words for sin and their meanings. Read the references given. Try reading the definition in place of the word. For example, in Psalm 51:3: I acknowledge my *pesha* and my *chataah* is ever before me. In the previous verse he calls on God to wash him clean from *avon*.

In reading the definition for the word we find David praying for cleansing from iniquity (*avon*), acknowledging his rebellion (*pesha*) and saying that his missing the mark (*chataah*) is always on his mind. One could say that David knew all the dimensions of sin!

Hebrew (Old Testament) Words for Sin

Greek (New Testament) Words for Sin

Lecture: Sin and Spiritual Formation

(25 minutes)

Defining Sin

The native Alaskans have two dozen words for snow. Falling snow, new snow, dry snow, drifting snow, blowing snow—each type of snow has its own word.

If you are from a faith tradition such as Calvinism, you need only one word for sin. Any deviation from perfect adherence and performance of God's perfect will is sin. One word fits all. Your intention meant nothing; you fell short thus you are guilty as—well, as guilty as sin.

If you find yourself in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition, you need many words for sin—just as the Bible does. In the Wesleyan tradition a sin of surprise, falling short because of ignorance, is a lot different from a deliberate sin of rebellion. John Wesley taught that sin “properly so-called” was a willful transgression of a known law of God.

Write your own definition and include it in the sharing time.

Write a working definition of sin based on your Bible study. You will have about three minutes. We will then share our definitions with each other.

Why the Doctrine of Sin Is Important for Spiritual Formation

The way some write and speak on the topic of spiritual formation you would think that they are not aware of the devastating consequences of sin. They seem to teach that with the right effort and skills one can cultivate the soul and move from the unholy to the holy. In *Whistling in the Dark*, Frederick Buechner says that some people act as if mastery of the Christian life “is something we can make happen any time we want to, like fudge, if we only follow the recipe.” You can’t put God in your pocket like a cell phone. And we cannot make the first step toward wholeness or holiness except by grace. Singers like Mariah Carey, in her recent hit “Hero,” assure us that we will find a “hero” within, a savior within ourselves, if we just look hard enough. But the Bible tells us, “By grace you have been saved, through faith; and that *not of yourselves, it is the gift of God*” (Eph 2: 8, NASB, emphasis added).

From Christianity Today, Sept. 24, 1990, 27.

From Turner, Christianity Today, 27.

Shallow talk of spiritual growth and spiritual potential flourishes today like wisteria on the sunny side of the barn. “The term ‘spiritual,’ ” writes Steve Turner, “can refer to anything that cannot either be tested in a laboratory or bolted to the floor.” When spiritual is defined without recognition of sin, destructive confusion results. “Christian conversion is not a case of fanning that little spiritual spark in the human soul into a flame. It is the case of invading a dark and doomed soul with spiritual life from above.”

From The Upward Call, 26-27.

The contamination of sin must be taken seriously. Morris Weigelt compares sin to massive contamination of oil spills, chemical dumping, and radioactive accidents that create irreversible damage. Even more lethal, he says, is sin that floods the spiritual environment with fatal contaminants. He quotes Walter Brueggemann’s *Then Comes the Poet*, “The poison of guilt is at least as damaging as nuclear waste. It must be put away where it cannot destroy or contaminate.”

See H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*, 278-283.

The image of God in humankind included four freedoms: freedom for God, freedom for others, freedom from the earth or the world, and freedom from self-domination. All these freedoms were lost in the Fall.

Does John Wesley go too far? He declares that in the Fall of Genesis 3 the human race “lost the life of God . . . the love of [for] God was extinguished . . . he lost . . . the knowledge . . . of God . . . he was deprived . . . and became unholy and unhappy. . . . He sunk into pride and self-will, the very image of the devil; and into sensual appetites and desires, the image of the beasts.”

From Works, 6:67-68.

Write out a finish to this sentence:

The doctrine of sin is important to spiritual formation because _____.

Write out your own response to be shared with the class.

You will have about three minutes. Then we will share our responses.

Sin Is an Inside Job

From our study of the Bible words for sin you know that some sins are acts. That is, sometimes sin is something we do. But even more serious is sin as state. That is, sin is also what we are. Sin is an inside job. The problem is the enemy within our own hearts.

Mel Lawrenz suggests this demonstration to communicate the nature of inward sin. Try it with your class. Be aware that no single comparison or object lesson will perfectly explain a complex idea. But this demonstration will make the point with power.

Start with a clean white sheet of paper. Mark or smudge it with a pencil.

This is how we often think of sin—an external soiling or marring of a clean soul.

Take another sheet of white paper and crumple it into a ball. Now, try to straighten it out.

Now the imperfections are not the work of an external element. The wrinkles and creases are part of the condition of the paper itself. You can make improvements by straightening out the paper and trying to press out the wrinkles, but the damage will not disappear. The same is true of sin. It is not a foreign infection; it is our condition.

From Lawrenz, The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 51-52.

Know that sin does not exist all by itself. It has no life apart from human motives and actions. Sin is not some external defect or flaw. It is not some chunk of toxic material that pollutes our body and soul. It is not something that can be spit out or have removed by surgery. No, sin is what fills that spiritual vacuum created by the loss of right relationship to God.

From *Lawrenz*, 51-52.

Mel Lawrenz writes, “Sin is not an alien power or an infecting germ. . . . Sin is the way we are. . . . [Sin] is not . . . something imposed on us; it is our very condition which has affected every faculty. Only a dramatic divine work of spiritual formation will help bent people become straight.”

From *Reflecting God*, 33.

Picture a medieval castle. Tall stone walls, strategically placed parapets, strong swordsmen guarding the gate. The castle is surrounded by a deep moat. Safe and secure, right? But what if there is an enemy within the castle who in the still of the night keeps letting down the drawbridge so the enemy can attack. The sinful human heart is like that. Sin keeps betraying our lofty aspirations, our firmest resolutions, our most energetic effort to walk in righteousness with God.

Lesson Close

(15 minutes)

Review

This we have learned about sin:

We were created to live like the noble tiger, but we have lived like smelly goats.

- The essence of sin is
unbelief or “unfaith”
pride or egocentricity
disobedience
Our first parents acted out these sinful traits and we have repeated them—every one of us.
- The sinful nature is both unwilling and unable to submit to God.
- Sin is an abusive master.
- Sin touches every part of our being.
- The strongest human common denominator is sin—we all share sin!
- Sin, in the Bible, is a complex matter and has shades of meaning that include mistakes, error, omission, missing the mark, being twisted and bent, going astray, trespass, transgression, rebellion, lawlessness, and indifference to God’s law and will.
- Sin is not a problem that can be solved by mere human effort. Divine intervention is required.

Look Ahead

We have now studied the human predicament—Who am I? Why am I here? What am I searching for? This week we studied sin that has devastated God’s design for our holiness and happiness.

Next lesson we will see what we can learn about the three-in-one God who is holy love. What has He done to redeem the human predicament?

Assign Homework

Refer students to the Student Guide.

Bible Study: What Is God Like?

Study the following passages and list all you learn about the nature and person of God. Be prepared to hand in your list.

- 1 Peter 1:16
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-5
- 1 John 4:16, 19.
- 2 Corinthians 13:14
- Colossians 1:16
- Genesis 17:1
- Revelation 22:17
- John 3:16

Complete the worksheet: Resource 4-3, “The Problem of Sin.”

Journal Prompts:

Three key words to make part of your journal experience this week:

- *Acknowledge* that sin has had devastating effects in your own life, family, and world.
- *Confess* any known sins in your present life—and forsake them at once.
- *Praise* God for past and present forgiveness for sin and for cleansing your heart.

Emphasize the journal assignment and the worksheet. It is these activities through which you will try to achieve your third objective. Collect and read the Worksheets carefully.

Punctuate the Finish

Found on page 4-8.

Look again at John Wesley’s classic description of sin. Note these aspects of sin. *Which have you battled most fiercely?*

- “darkness that may be felt”
- “ignorance and error”
- “vice in ten thousand forms”
- “guilt, fear, sorrow, shame, remorse”
- “misery the daughter of sin”
- “sickness and pain . . . death”

Lift your hands to God in praise for every item on the list from which He has delivered you. If you can’t think of a proper prayer, try Psalm 124:68.

Praise be to the Lord. . . . We have escaped like a bird out of the fowler’s snare; the snare has been broken, and we have escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

If you could not lift a prayer of praise for deliverance from sin but are still lost in “darkness that may be

felt,” take heart. Let this account of a sinner worse than you turn you to the Lord in hope of deliverance.

Closing story—a positive one—a story of redemption from sin.

He belonged to a gang called the Wreckers. They were known for their violence, hatred, and a sick sense of humor. By his own admission he was a thief, a pleasure slave, a fornicator and adulterer. He took a mistress for ten years and fathered an illegitimate son.

Though raised by a devout Christian mother named Monica, he practiced a non-Christian religion that did not frown at the sensual pleasures that he loved. He studied communication and got the equivalent of a Ph.D. in the subject and became a teacher of speech and rhetoric. His sinful escapades continued.

Then one day he read the Epistle to the Romans and encountered Christ. His life was transformed. He gave himself to God’s service and became one of the most influential saints in history. He lived AD 354-430. His name was Aurelius Augustine, St. Augustine to us.

To most Protestants he is regarded as the father of orthodox theology. The Eastern Orthodox think of him as the greatest of all the Church Fathers. The Catholics call Augustine the patron saint of theologians. Philosophers see in him the greatest thinker between Plotinus (3rd century) and Aquinas (12th century).

His many writings are still studied by Christians. Perhaps the most familiar is his *Confessions*, a true classic in spirituality that any believer should read. The redeemed Aurelius still reflects God’s redeeming love after all these centuries.

Close with a song—suggestions:

- “Amazing Grace” (John Newton)
- “Glorious Freedom” (Haldor Lillenas)
- “Something Beautiful” (Gloria Gaither)

Lesson 5

What Is God Like?

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide Resource 5-1
0:10	The God of the Bible	Lecture	Resource 5-2 Resource 5-3 Resource 5-4
0:35	The Articles of Faith	Small-Group Study	Resource 5-5
0:55	Planning Worship for Holy Trinity Sunday	Small-Group Project	Resource 5-6
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide Resource 5-7

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

William Greathouse, *Wholeness in Christ* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1998), chapter 1, 11-26.

Stanley J. Grenz, *What Christians Really Believe and Why* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), chapter 4, 63-84.

Roderick T. Leupp, *Knowing the Name of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996).

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), chapters 5 and 6, 41-55.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 30-37.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- cite and discuss some of the key elements in the nature of the God revealed in the Bible and described in the Articles of Faith of the Church of the Nazarene
- have the opportunity to open their hearts to the holy, loving, seeking God of the Bible
- present a more authentic vision of the Christian God in their ministry situations

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Bible study
Worksheet, Resource 4-3
Journaling

Assign for next lesson

Sermon Outline: Today you worked on a worship service plan for Holy Trinity Sunday. Before next session create a sermon for that service.

Step 1: Select one of these passages for the text:

- Matthew 28: 16-20
- 2 Corinthians 13: 4-14
- Galatians 4: 1-7

Step 2: Study the passage thoroughly and prayerfully.

Step 3: State the theme of the sermon.

Step 4: Write out the objectives for the sermon.

Step 5: Write out the introduction for the sermon

Step 6: Create an outline for the body of the sermon

Step 7: Write the conclusion for the sermon.

Hand in your paper with all seven steps at our next session.

Journal Prompt: Record in your journal any corrections, adjustments, or expansions that this lesson brought to your concept of God.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on three students to give one thing that they learned about the nature and person of God.

Return and collect homework.

Motivator

What is God like? What is His nature? How does He relate to people like us? To the world? The answer to such questions is utterly crucial to growth in grace and spiritual formation.

Refer students to Resource 5-1.

This discussion immediately puts students in touch with the notions of God that are flourishing in their neighborhoods, families, and in the popular media. This approach may be more useful than introducing them to the ontological, moral, cosmological, and teleological arguments for God that they will surely encounter in their systematic theology classes.

Here are some contemporary statements about God cited by Stanley J. Grenz in *What Christians Really Believe and Why* (73-76). Which of these, if any, echoes your own beliefs?

1. "God is actually in the flowers and the growing grass and all the little chirping, singing things."
Agnes Sanford, charismatic Episcopal missionary
2. In a short story (*Teddy*) a spiritually sensitive boy gets an insight while watching his sister pour a glass of milk. "All of a sudden I saw that she was God and the milk was God. I mean, all she was doing was pouring God into God."
J. D. Salinger, American Jewish author
3. In *The Color Purple* Shug Avery says, "God is inside you and inside everybody else. You come into the world with God. But only them that search for it inside find it. . . .I believe that God is in everything."
Alice Walker, African American novelist
4. "No matter how much we may like to pussyfoot around it . . . God wants us to become Himself (or Herself or Itself)."
M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*

5. “Be still and know that you are God,” teaches Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, rewriting Psalm 46: 10, which says, “Be still, and know that I am God.”
6. “There need be no guilt or recrimination, where at last the self is indistinguishable from God.”
Alan Watts, Episcopal priest turned Zen master

This sort of talk is labeled the “new immanentalism.” It emphasizes the immanence of God to the near exclusion of the transcendence of God. “All is one and all is God” is a popular manifestation among pluralists and devotees of Eastern religions. Immanentalism in evangelical circles acts itself out as God the backslapping buddy, God as my girlfriend or doting grandparent.

Orientation

With the concerns of the holy life before us, and in light of the immanentalism around us, we want to learn what we can about the God of the Bible.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- cite and discuss some of the key elements in the nature of the God revealed in the Bible and described in the Articles of Faith of the Church of the Nazarene
- be given the opportunity to open their hearts to the holy, loving, seeking God of the Bible
- present a more authentic vision of the Christian God in their ministry situations

Lesson Body

Lecture: The God of the Bible

(25 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 5-2. Use this as a Jigsaw exercise. In each four-person group assign one person to deal with each "cluster" of sources.

Take time to establish groups before beginning the lecture.

Refer students to Resource 5-3.

"I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling . . . 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.' At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke" (Isa 6: 1-4).

The Essence of the God of the Christian Faith

God Is Holy

Holy, holy, holy—what does it mean that God is holy? Does it mean that He is more honest, more moral, more just than human beings? He is all those, of course, but the term "holy" means so much more. It is more a religious term than a moral term.

Rudolf Otto and John G. Gammie described the overwhelming holiness of God using these Latin terms:

- **Tremendum**—"awefulness," plenitude of power that evokes dread and fear
- **Majestas**—absolute "unapproachableness," "overpoweringness", plenitude of being
- **Energicum**—energy that the mystic experiences as consuming fire, urgency, vitality, force, energy
- **Mysterium**—being the "Wholly Other," in a category separate to himself, transcendent, supernatural
- **Fascinans**—compelling, fascinating, spiritually intoxicating, rapture, exaltation

See Greathouse, Wholeness in Christ, 13.

If you wish, stop and do a Bible study of Exodus 19. Use Greathouse, Wholeness in Christ, 13-14 as a starting point.

In Exodus 19 we see one of the early self-revelations of God. A careful reading of this chapter reveals all five of the preceding dimensions of God's holiness.

As used in the Old Testament "holy" had three dimensions.

- First and foremost, it means *separation*. God is separate and distinct from all of creation. God alone is holy. Any human holiness is merely a gift derived from God. Nothing about us is inherently or naturally holy.
- Second, the holiness of God is sometimes synonymous with the burning splendor of the presence of the Lord.
- Third, God's holiness refers to His purity. God's holiness is the opposite of "uncleanness" and carries connotations of justice, ceremonial purity, integrity, and upright morality.

See Greathouse, 17-19.

A word used hundreds of times in the Bible to describe God's holiness is *Qodesh*. It means "separate," or "separated," or "wholly other." This simply indicates that God is above and beyond, different and distinct from any other being, from all creation. God inhabits a category all by himself. God alone is holy.

Holiness is not something God "has." It is not something that we "attribute" to Him. Holiness is more than an attribute of God. Holiness is what God is. As theologian J. Kenneth Grider says, "Holiness is what God is in His **isness**."

When theologians say that God is transcendent, they mean that God is above and beyond all that we can ever think, know, or say about Him. Transcendence has to do with the power, majesty, energy (a flaming fire), the supernatural, dreaded, and compelling presence of God the Creator of the universe.

Since God dwells in a completely exclusive category, He is sharply distinguished from the natural world. Those who teach that your rosebush and the snake under it swallowing a robin's egg are all God or a part of God find themselves teaching an unbiblical doctrine.

God Is Love

In His very essence God is not only blazing holiness but also agape love. Roderick T. Leupp writes, "Holiness alone would annihilate us. Love alone would trivialize our sin. It is a holy God against whom we have sinned, but it is a loving God who forgives our sin and remakes us from within."

From Reflecting God, 44.

Fortunately for us God has spoken His holiness in a human idiom. That miracle is the Person of Jesus Christ. God's glory, majesty, and awe are not diminished, but heightened in Him. The holy transcendent God is far above and beyond us; the loving immanent God reaches out to us.

From Grace, Faith, and Holiness, 190.

H. Ray Dunning notes, "As holiness is the starting point, so love is the high point in the biblical unfolding of the nature of God."

From Wesley Hymns (Kansas City: Lillenas), 118.

Charles Wesley wrote
"Pure universal Love Thou art. . . .
Thy nature and Thy name is Love."

But what does all that mean to you and me? Everything—because, as St. Augustine put it, God "loves each one of us as if there were only one of us to love."

God Is Three-in-One

The scripture citations in this column are "points of enrichment" that you may add to the lecture.

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor 13:14, emphasis added).

Point out that in this verse each person of the Holy Trinity is mentioned.

From Grenz, What Christians Really Believe and Why, 71.

Christians believe that the one God of the Bible has revealed himself to us as Father, Son and Spirit.

Pluralists today naively claim that Christians and adherents of pagan gods from Han spirits to Ogun to Vishnu all worship the same God and end up in the same heaven. But at the heart of our Christian faith is the proclamation that the only true God is the one revealed in the Bible through Jesus Christ.

Stanley J. Grenz summarizes belief in the One and Triune God in these words:

Christians can conclude that according to the revelation in Jesus, the only God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This God is one, for the three share the same will, nature, and essence. Christians are not polytheists, for we do not worship three distinct Gods . . .we do not serve some generic "God" but the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Belief in the Trinity is more than saying there are three ways of experiencing God. The three Persons of the Trinity are eternally united in the ideal divine community. God is the eternal community of love, and God is love and was love even before our universe came into existence, even before there were lost sinners to love. The doctrine of the Trinity shows us that isolated discipleship is not what God intended for us. While honoring our personhood, God calls us to

fellowship within the family of faith that echoes the Divine Community above.

Proper teaching of the Trinity keeps us from pitting one Person against another within the Divine Community. The Father, Son, and Spirit, the persons of the Trinity do not act independently. We cannot separate the One God. Wherever we find one Person of the Trinity all are present. The Athanasian Creed declares, "Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit . . . the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God." That's why it is ludicrous for a Sunday School paper that I once read to say, "God killed Jesus for your sins!" The second graders for whom this was intended would doubtless feel sorry for Jesus and resent God the Father. No, every Person within the Trinity acted in unison as God absorbed within himself the suffering required for our redemption.

Further, adequate teaching about the Trinity protects us from an icy Deism or a sentimental pantheism. The Deists' God is "watching us from a distance," as Bette Midler's song says, but never gets involved. Pantheism teaches "all is God and God is all." Thus, the crucial doctrine of the Trinity keeps a wholesome balance between the transcendent holiness and the loving immanence of God.

From Reflecting God, 46.

The Celtic Christians of old spoke of the Trinity in such natural and devotional terms that faith is not strained:

Refer students to Resource 5-4.

Three folds in the cloth,
yet only one napkin is there,
Three joints in the finger,
but still only one finger fair,
Three leaves of the shamrock,
yet no more than one shamrock to wear,
Frost, snowflakes, and ice,
all in water their origin share,
Three Persons in God;
to one God alone we make prayer.

Esther De Waal, The Celtic Way of Prayer (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 39-40.

The Attributes and Activities of God

Our understanding of God is always incomplete. A God who can be mastered is no longer God. But biblical faith affirms that the very essence of God as He has revealed himself is centered in these three words: Holy, Love, Trinity.

But we have also learned more.

God Is Good

Unlike the Force in *Star Wars*, the deities of Traditional African Religion, the Hindu gods, and the New Age “godlings,” the Christian God is good—all good. The Force in George Lucas’s classic space story can produce a moral model like Luke Skywalker and at the same time make an archvillain like Darth Vader. Lucas’s Force is “beyond good and evil encompassing both.” New Age gurus teach that negative experiences such as hunger, abuse, and rape are just as much a part of God as those experiences that seem good. Hindu teacher Swami Vivekananda tells us that God may manifest himself as Evil as well as Good. Eshu, the nearest thing in Traditional African Religion to the Satan of the Bible, is, strangely enough, also capable of great good.

From Grenz, 79.

“He is good: his love endures forever” (2 Chr 7:3).

But the Christian God is good through and through. His constant righteousness is the measure for all moral conduct for human beings. The adherents of the gods who are good on Mondays and Wednesdays and evil on Tuesdays and Thursdays will have to stand in bewildered silence when Christians sing “God Is So Good.”

From Reflecting God, 44-45.

Yet in the maddening maze of things
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed hope my spirit clings,
I know that God is good.

—John Greenleaf Whittier
The Eternal Goodness

God Is Sovereign Creator

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1). No white-frosted scientist laboring in the lab, no fevered vision of a New Age synchophant meditating in the noonday sun can ever change that.

*“By him all things were created”
(Col 1:16).*

Since God is love, all His acts are loving. Thus, creation was a gracious act of divine love.

Since God is Creator He is also Sovereign. The Creator-Owner of the world alone sets the standards for our world. Our Sovereign is unchangeable (immutable). That is, His loving intention for creation never changes. Ever and always, He seeks what is best for us.

God Is Personal

"The Lord appeared . . . and said, 'I am God Almighty,' " (Gen 17:1).

Since we were created as persons, we can only relate to God through the prism of personhood. Since God, who created us in His own image, is also personal, we can relate to Him. If God is not personal, no vital experience of God is possible for us. This truth is evident in scripture. "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him . . . We love because he first loved us" (1 Jn 4: 16, 19). Surely this describes a relationship among persons.

That God relates to us as person-to-person makes all the difference. Buddhists, Hindus, New Age practitioners, and many postmodern spiritualists speak of a god who is impersonal. If God is all and all is God, our ultimate destiny is to merge mindlessly into some impersonal nirvana. If so, human personhood is merely extra baggage to be lugged on an endless journey to oblivion.

God Is Truth, Righteousness, and Mercy

"The Lord is righteous, he loves justice" (Ps 11:7).

Holiness and love form the essence of who God is. They are expressed in truth, righteousness (justice), and mercy. These are often called the moral attributes of God. The Lord reveals His truth, righteousness, and mercy to us so that we, who are to reflect His character, will know how to behave.

The picture of the God you long for is beginning to emerge. There is a God-shaped vacuum in our hearts that aches to know God, to walk with Him.

Paco, all is forgiven. If you forgive me, too, please meet me at La Estrella Cafe at noon on Thursday. I love you. Your Father.

From Reflecting God, 51.

This ad was placed in a newspaper in Madrid, Spain, by a father pleading for his son to come home. According to *Pursuit* magazine, 800 Pacos showed up at La Estrella Cafe at noon on Thursday! All were seeking reconciliation with their fathers.

Allow time for the cluster meetings and reports.

The Articles of Faith

(20 minutes)

Plan to supply regular dictionaries and theological dictionaries—one for each small group—if possible.

Refer students to Resource 5-5.

Jigsaw this exercise by assigning each Base Group to study and report on only one of the Articles of Faith. If a group finishes ahead of the others, ask it to start work on another Article of Faith.

Suppose you had to explain the first three Nazarene Articles of Faith to a class of 12-year-olds. Study the following Articles of Faith discussing the italicized *descriptors* and *verb phrases*. Discuss the key terms in your Base Groups. Refer to regular and theological dictionaries (such as *Beacon Dictionary of Theology*). Decide the most important words and concepts to be explained to your class of preteens.

1. The Triune God

We believe in one *eternally existent, infinite God, Sovereign* of the Universe; that He only is God, *creative and administrative, holy* in nature, attributes, and purpose; that He, as God, is *Triune in essential being*, revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2. Jesus Christ

We believe in Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Triune Godhead; that He was *eternally one* with the Father; that He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and was *born of the Virgin Mary*, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and manhood, are thus *united in one Person* very God and very man, the God-man.

We believe that Jesus Christ *died for our sins*, and that He truly *arose from the dead* and took again His body, together with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith He *ascended* into heaven and is there engaged in *intercession* for us.

3. The Holy Spirit

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Triune Godhead, that He is *ever present and efficiently active* in and with the Church of Christ, *convincing* the world of sin, *regenerating* those who repent and believe, *sanctifying* believers, and *guiding* into all truth as it is in Jesus.

You may want to call attention to or arrange a beyond the classroom Bible study of some of the scripture references that are cited in the Manual with each Article of Faith.

For Reflection

These Reflection questions are also included in Resource 5-5.

1. *Which concepts will be most easily grasped by your 12-year-olds?*
2. *Which terms or ideas are the hardest to explain?*
3. *Which ideas do preteens most need to know?*
4. **Earlier we saw that Holiness, Love, and Trinity were the very essence of God's being as taught by the Scriptures and the Christian faith. Which of these is most emphasized in the three Articles of Faith? Which is stressed least? How does this affect your teaching of the 12-year-old class?**

Planning a Holy Trinity Sunday Worship Service

(25 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 5-6.

On the Christian calendar—followed by both Protestants and Catholics—Holy Trinity Sunday is the first Sunday after Pentecost. It usually comes around June 1.

The Revised Common Lectionary provides readings and sermon texts that journey, more or less through the Bible in a three-year cycle. Pastors following the lectionary will plan a worship service and a sermon once each year on the Holy Trinity. The lectionary provides each year a cluster of Old Testament and New Testament texts that teach about the nature and acts of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

If you have run out of class time, consider Resource 5-6 a take-home assignment to replace the Holy Trinity Sunday sermon. Another option: let students choose either the sermon outline or the service planning of Resource 5-6 as a take-home assignment.

Working in small groups using the lectionary texts and Resource 5-6 plan a worship service for your church or ministry setting.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Ask five students to stand and state one thing we have studied or learned today.

Look Ahead

Some describe the functions of the Persons of the Holy Trinity in these words: The Father is Creator, the Son is Savior, the Holy Spirit is Sanctifier and Sustainer. This description has limitations and inadequacies—as do all our descriptions of God. But next lesson we will take a closer look—as our own limitations permit—at the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ our Savior.

Assign Homework

Refer students to the Student Guide.

Sermon Outline: Today you worked on a worship service plan for Holy Trinity Sunday. Before next session create a sermon for that service.

Step 1: Select one of these passages for the text:

- Matthew 28: 16-20
- 2 Corinthians 13: 4-14
- Galatians 4: 1-7

Step 2: Study the passage thoroughly and prayerfully.

Step 3: State the theme of the sermon.

Step 4: Write out the objectives for the sermon.

Step 5: Write out the introduction of the sermon.

Step 6: Create an outline for the body for the sermon.

Step 7: Write the Conclusion for the sermon.

Hand in your paper with all seven steps at our next session.

Journal Prompt: Record in your journal any corrections, adjustments, or expansions that this lesson brought to your concept of God.

Punctuate the Finish

Refer students to Resource 5-7.

Hear the call to you from the heart of God. The names Ephraim (a wayward tribe), Israel and Moab (wayward nations) have been deleted from these verses so that you can write in your own name.

God said,

“My soul moans like a lyre for _____” (Isa 16:11, RSV).

“How can I give you up, _____?” (Hos 11:8).

“How can I hand you over, _____?” (Hos 11:8).

Lesson 6

What's So Special About Jesus?

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	The Big Picture	Bible Study	Resource 6-1
0:35	Jesus Identifies with Us	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 6-2
0:50*	"Cross Ways"	Sermon/Discussion	Resource 6-3
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

*Note: See the special time considerations regarding the sermon. It varies in length according to the three possible ways to use it. It can take as little as 20 minutes or as long as 45 minutes. See faculty notes accompanying "Cross Ways."

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988), chapters 10–12, 302-393.

Stanley J. Grenz, *What Christians Really Believe and Why* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 85-111.

J. Kenneth Grider, *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), chapters 11 and 12, 297-335.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), 57-68.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 38-43.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*, 17-18.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- gain a better intellectual grasp of contemporary, traditional, and biblical ideas about the person and work of Jesus Christ
- develop an “understanding of the heart” that welcomes Jesus as the Savior and Lord who identifies with us
- demonstrate in discussion, writing, and ministry a knowledge of and appreciation for the Christ of the Bible

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Sermon or service outline
Journaling

Assign for next lesson

Soul-winning Plans: Personal evangelism plans are usually gospel summaries. Locate all the soul-winning plans you can (such as the Four Spiritual Laws, the Roman Way to Salvation, etc.) and bring them to class.

Journal Prompt: In response to today's lesson write in your journal.

- Note an idea or concept that had an impact on you—positive or negative.
- Record an emotion you experienced while processing the content of today's lesson.
- Write about something you decided or actually did in your personal life, spiritual life, ministry, or family life in response to this lesson.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Have the students exchange their homework with another student and give comments to each other.

Return and collect homework.

Motivator

*This "introduction" is based on chapter 7 of *Reflecting God* and chapter 5 of *What Christians Really Believe and Why*.*

Both of these sources are recommended in "Background Reading for the Teacher."

Jesus here, Jesus there. Everywhere you turn you see Jesus—on T-shirts, coffee mugs, posters, book covers, on talk shows, onstage, and bumper stickers. On television *Jesus of Nazareth*, *Jesus*, and *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. And, like it or not, televangelists hyping their brand of "Jesus saves, Jesus heals, and Jesus prospers" as if He were a brand of toothpaste or pain reliever.

On the cusp of the new millennium *Time* magazine gave its cover (Dec 6, 1999) to Jesus. He had been there at least three times before. Jesus made the cover of the April 24, 2000 *U.S. News and World Report*. In one year He had appeared on the cover of *Time*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *Newsweek*, *Life*, and *Atlantic Monthly*.

So what's so special about Jesus? Who is Jesus anyway? Two thousand years ago Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do people say I am?" The answers came back John the Baptist, Elijah, or maybe one of the prophets. Jesus then confronted the disciples with the question that you and I must answer too: "Who do you say I am?" (Mk 8:27-29).

A lot of volunteers have offered their humble opinions about that question lately. Here are several cited by Stanley Grenz in *What Christians Really Believe and Why*.

Norman Mailer, the secular novelist, contributed a first-person "historical" novel in which the lead character is Jesus himself. As the tale unfolds He corrects some of the exaggerations produced by the Bible writers Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Marianne Williamson, a disciple of Helen Schucman, creator of *A Course in Miracles*, calls Jesus and other spiritually advanced avatars, “our evolutionary elder brothers.”

Shirley MacLaine labeled Jesus an adept yogi who can teach us how to do everything He did.

Some of the deconstructionists of the “Jesus” Seminar imagine that Jesus was one of the Cynics, a band of ragged, longhaired, men who appeared in public places and tongue-lashed the people with loud preachments about getting back to nature and meditation as the cure for a sick society.

Some folks, trying to build an ecumenical bridge between Buddhism and Christianity, have come up with the notion that during His youthful years Jesus left the carpenter business to Joseph and strolled off to India and encountered the wisdom and compassion of the Buddha. He then went back to Galilee, they conjecture, burning to interpret the Buddha for His own kind!

Orientation

No question could be more significant for spiritual formation than the one we explore today. Who is Jesus and what is the meaning of His life, death, and resurrection?

Learner Objectives

Direct students to their Student Guide.

To help students

- gain a better intellectual grasp of contemporary, traditional, and Biblical ideas about the person and work of Jesus Christ
- develop an “understanding of the heart” that welcomes Jesus as the Savior and Lord who identifies with us
- demonstrate in discussion, writing, and ministry a knowledge of and appreciation for the Christ of the Bible and the Christian faith

Lesson Body

The Big Picture: What the Bible Says About Jesus

(25 minutes)

You will not be able to exhaust or explain all that the Bible teaches about Jesus Christ in this exercise. But it will help your students expand their knowledge and experience of the Savior.

Refer students to Resource 6-1. Then assign the work to study pairs or to Base Groups. For example each "pair" or group could find the answers to five of the matching items.

Draw a huge picture frame on a chalkboard or use a large bulletin board. Refer to it as "The Big Picture."

Public reading of the scripture is important—don't skip this part.

The answer key for Resource 6-1.

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| 1. B | 14. P, Q |
| 2. E, F | 15. S, NN |
| 3. M | 16. Z |
| 4. AA, BB | 17. W, X |
| 5. EE, FF | 18. HH, JJ |
| 6. CC | 19. KK |
| 7. DD | 20. O |
| 8. C | 21. K, L |
| 9. D | 22. LL, MM |
| 10. H, I | 23. J |
| 11. V | 24. R |
| 12. GG | 25. N |
| 13. U | 26. Y |

In your groups find the answers to your assigned section.

Study pairs or groups will share the results with the whole class in this manner. When a study pair or group is called upon the reporter can either put their answer on a designated square on the chalkboard or they can write their answer on a plain sheet of paper and thumbtack or tape it in place on the bulletin board.

What you should write in the square on the board or on a blank paper would be just the key word or phrase and the Bible reference. Then read the scripture passage aloud.

For example, a study pair is assigned to find the scripture that calls Jesus the Good Shepherd. They would write and post these words: "Good Shepherd," John 10: 11. They would then read the verse aloud.

Jesus, Our Lord, Identifies with Us

(15 minutes)

In the previous activity your students got a glimpse of the “Big Picture” of Biblical teachings about Jesus Christ. In this exercise you want to help them view the “Christ event” from an angle that speaks poignantly to spiritual formation.

It is recommended that in preparation for this lecture you read “Jesus Identifies with Us” pages 59-61 in Reflecting God.

Refer students to Resource 6-2.

“We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin” (Heb 4: 15).

Jesus, our High Priest, builds a bridge across the gulf that separates us from God. The Latin word for “priest” means “bridge builder.” At once, we think of the Cross as the bridge to God, and it surely is, but in other important ways Jesus identifies with mere men and women like us.

The Incarnation itself is an astounding act of identification with the human race. God becoming man is a dramatic identification with sinners such as you and me. In-car-na-tion means “coming in the flesh” with its chafing limitations.

St. Ignatius of Antioch (martyred in AD 117) taught that Jesus took on human form not for 33 years here on earth, but for eternity. Seeing how Jesus so totally identifies with us mortals, who would want to deny what Ignatius taught?

The Temptation of Jesus reveals how He identifies with us. Jesus struggled with hunger and its economic pressures. But He overcame the temptation to let physical needs elbow out spiritual priorities (Mt 4:2-4). Jesus declined the temptation to secure His following through the sensational. “Jump off the Temple turret and come floating down unhurt,” the devil suggests. “That will get their attention better than a sermon.” Satan then quotes a psalm to Jesus to make his point (see Mt 4:6). But Jesus has the devil’s number. He knows his name: diabolus, the one who “tears apart,” the one who causes “division.” Here we see that Satan, the very antithesis of true religion, traffics in miracles

and quotes scripture! Should one beware of those who constantly seek miracles and mumble proof text scriptures?

Further, Jesus withstood the temptation to strive for worldly success—not making a million dollars, not that kind of success, but something more sinister. Jesus rejected the power whereby Satan, the “prince of the power of the air” (Eph 2:2, KJV), rules the kingdoms of the world. The deal the devil pitched was, “Submit to me, worship me, and I will share my depraved power over the world.” Jesus flatly refused the demonic; so should we.

The Lord, who is our guide and judge, has also walked in our moccasins. He knows the temptations that will bait you tomorrow and the burdens that weigh you down today. And He sympathizes with our human weaknesses (see Heb 4:15).

The Sacrificial Death of Jesus is the ultimate act of identification. He who knew no sin became sin for us so that we could be reconciled to God (see 2 Cor 5:19-21). He felt the agony of the ultimate loneliness that surges into the soul when sin separates us from God. Christ so identified with our sinfulness that the sense of separation from God pierced Him to the core. Quoting Psalm 22, He cried out: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mt 27:46).

Surely God had not truly forsaken Christ, for where one member of the Holy Trinity is, all are present. And on the cross “*God was in Christ*, reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Cor 5:19, KJV, emphasis added). Yet in the human depths of His being, Christ tasted death and separation on our behalf. As theologian Thomas A. Noble writes, “God himself, God the Son, became human in order that in our behalf He might complete the at-one-ment [atonement] from the human side too.”

The Baptism of Jesus. Perhaps nothing more dramatically signals Christ’s identification with unworthy sinners than His baptism. It is a take-your-breath-away act of identification with us.

Let me set the scene. In the murky waters of the Jordan, John the Baptizer is baptizing those who respond to his call for a “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Lk 3:3). “You brood of vipers!” John thunders. “Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance” (Lk 3:7-8).

From “*Why Did Jesus Die?*”
Illustrated Bible Life, March—May,
1996, 14.

See Reflecting God, . 60.

Those wearied with the weight of their wickedness step into the Jordan as an act of repentance. The word for “repentance” is *metanoia* which means to change your mind and turn in a new direction, that is, turn from your sins and to God.

See the men and women, in godly sorrow for their sins, wade out to meet John. He prays for them and then baptizes them. Somehow they feel their sins wash away in the waters of the Jordan. *Metanoia* has happened. Forgiveness is received and those dripping with the baptismal waters no longer define themselves as sinners.

Who is that? It’s Jesus the Nazarene. He is in line—in line with the repenting sinners. Why would the Son of God “who knew no sin” be baptized in a service like this? There is no doubt about the invitation given by the preacher. This “baptism of repentance” is for guilty sinners!

So why would Jesus Christ who has never sinned, not ever, not even once—why would He wade into the river as if He were just another sinful man?

According to scholars and teachers like Ralph Earle, Wesley Tracy, and John Shea, only one answer makes sense.

Do you know what that answer is?

Pose this question and let your students try to answer before proceeding to the last paragraph of the lecture.

Why would Jesus do such a thing as step in line with a bunch of sinners to be baptized?

Here’s the only answer that makes sense. Jesus so identifies with the transgressors whom He has come to save that He walks into the baptismal waters with them. He demonstrates His solidarity with lost sinners. “Christ so identifies with human need that He, who will one day bear our sins to Calvary, now experiences on behalf of all humankind the washing of baptism!”

From Reflecting God, 60.

Sermon: "Cross Ways"

(20-40 minutes, depending on the strategy used)

Decide how you will use Resource 6-3.

The sermon is about 3,100 words in length. Spoken at the usual rate of 150-160 words per minute, it will run some 24-28 minutes.

You can use this sermon manuscript in several ways.

- *You could make it an advance homework assignment. Thus, less class time would be required in this lesson. That's the 20-minute version of this exercise.*
- *You could preach the sermon yourself to your class and conduct the discussion that follows.*
- *This is the recommended procedure. Use five students to deliver the sermon in class. See that each gets their assigned section in advance. Have one student give the text and the introduction. Let each of the other four students deliver one of the four main sections of the sermon.*

See Resource 6-3 in the Student Guide. It is the manuscript of an actual sermon preached at First Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, MO, USA by guest preacher Dr. Wesley D. Tracy.

The speaker knew that parts of this "teaching" sermon would challenge commonly held assumptions. Therefore, "pastoral" rather than "confrontational" language was used. He hoped to open minds and not use accusatory language that always produces defensiveness.

There are many quotations in the sermon. Of course, most of the footnotes were not spoken in the preaching of the sermon. But the quotations from respected theologians let the hearers know that these ideas are not the preacher's alone.

While you do have the printed copy in your Student Guide, please close your books and listen to what is said.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

The Two-Minute Paper

You have two minutes to write the answer to this question:

Watch the time. Collect the papers. They will give you good evidence whether or not you have achieved the objectives of today's lesson.

Who is Jesus and what did He do?

Look Ahead

Next lesson we will explore the transforming grace experienced in Christian conversion. Being born again is the experience that makes true spiritual growth possible.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Student Guide.

Soul-winning Plans: Personal evangelism plans are usually gospel summaries. Locate all the soul-winning plans you can (such as the Four Spiritual Laws, the Roman Way to Salvation, etc.) and bring them to class.

Journal Prompts: In response to today's lesson write in your journal:

- Note an idea or concept that had either a positive or negative impact on you.
- Record an emotion you experienced while processing the content of today's lesson.
- Write about something you decided or actually did in your personal life, spiritual life, ministry, or family life in response to this lesson.

Punctuate the Finish

C. S. Lewis warns us how silly it is to say that Jesus was a great moral teacher but not the Son of God.

“A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a moral teacher. He would be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil from Hell. You must make your choice.”

From Mere Christianity (Macmillan Co., 1970), 40-41.

Lewis goes on to say, “Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

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Lesson 7

Transforming Moments: A New Start with a New Heart

For Unit 2, Introduction and Objectives, see Resource 7-0

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Testimonies of Christian Conversion	Bible Study	Resource 7-1 Resource 7-2
0:30	How God Found Me	Guided Discussion	Resource 7-3
0:55	The Transforming Encounter	Lecture/Discussion	Homework Resource 7-4
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

Wesley Tracy, et al., *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 35-47.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), 69-75.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 44-50.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*, 19-20,

Wesley Tracy, *New Testament Evangelism Today* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1973), 27-46.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- understand the priority of the new birth in the spiritual life and learn how to help others to find this transforming moment, this life-changing encounter with the Living Lord who can give us a “new start with a new heart”
- appreciate anew their own experience of the saving grace of God, and desire to serve Christ by sharing the “Good News” with others
- gain confidence in their own knowledge of the Scripture and the gospel and in their ability to use that knowledge to bring others to Christ, and to demonstrate that faith and confidence by witnessing during the coming week

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Soul-winning plans
Journaling

Assign for next lesson

Research:

Begin an annotated Bibliography on the Wesleyan-Holiness doctrine of sanctification or holiness. Each student is to find at least five books (or chapters in books) on the subject and at least three magazine or journal articles on the subject. The student is to write a one-paragraph “annotation” that describes the main thrust of the book, chapter, or article. Be sure that such works as the following are included:

Prepare a model example to share with the students.

- *Love Made Perfect and Wholeness in Christ*, by William Greathouse
- *Entire Sanctification*, by J. Kenneth Grider
- *All Loves Excelling* by John A. Knight
- *Reflecting God* (chapters 9-10), Wesley Tracy, et al.
- For articles check past issues of *Holiness Today* and the *Herald of Holiness*.
- Check also the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (on-line).

Journal Prompt:

Write a one-stanza song of praise to God for your own “transforming moment” of conversion. If you need help to get started, sing some songs such as “Why Should He Love Me So?” “Victory in Jesus,” “All That Thrills My Soul Is Jesus.”

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Motivator

Since this class primarily serves ministerial students, it is assumed that they have already experienced the new birth. Therefore, today's activities will focus on how to lead others to the "transforming moment" of conversion. However, do not take it for granted that every student is living in saving grace. Be sensitive to the Spirit. If someone needs to pray for saving grace, be prepared to put aside the lesson plan and minister to the need at hand.

Begin by reading this true story or by having it read to your class.

Sandi pushed the doorbell again. No one came. She and her visitation partner, Karen, started to leave. Suddenly a middle-aged woman appeared in the doorway. She smiled at the teenage girls.

"Oh, hello. We're from the Church of the Nazarene. We would like to . . .!"

The lady was pointing to her ears and her mouth and shaking her head. The girls got the message—she could neither hear nor speak.

Still smiling, the woman motioned for them to come on in. They all sat down at the dining room table. The lady took out pads and pencils and gave each girl one. She introduced herself, "I'm Martha Franklin," she wrote.

"Nice to meet you," Sandi penciled back. "My name is Sandi Rouse and this is Karen Titus. We want to give you this Christian magazine and invite you to our church."

As Martha Franklin read the note and wrote her reply, Sandi thought about her prayers preceding this visitation effort. She had promised the Lord that if anyone invited them in she would try to lead that person to Christ.

After a few more pleasant note exchanges, Sandi wrote the "vital question." "Miss Franklin, do you know Jesus as your personal Savior?"

Martha didn't write an answer. She just sadly shook her head "no."

"Would you like to know more about Christ? Do you want to know that everything is all right between you and God?"

With an expression that blended eagerness and wistfulness, Martha Franklin quickly wrote, "Yes."

Sandi then proceeded to lead her step by step through the "Roman Road to Salvation."

First, Romans 3:23 to show that all persons apart from Christ are lost sinners. “Do you realize that this means you too, Miss Franklin?”

“Oh, yes, yes” came the scribbled reply.

Next, Romans 6:23 to show her the “wages of sin.”

Then two verses to show her how to be saved. Romans 5:8 shows God’s matchless love. “Do you realize, Martha, that God loves you just as you are in spite of your sins?”

“I want to believe it.”

“It’s true, read this verse again.”

One more step, Romans 10:8-9 (with Rom 10:13 and 6:23 used for support). “Now, Martha, let’s pray. Ask God to forgive you for everything you have ever done wrong. Ask Christ to give you a new start with a new heart. Will you?”

“Yes, oh yes.”

Sandi and Karen reached across the table and took Martha Franklin’s hand. They bowed in voiceless prayer for a few sacred moments.

Joy, peace, and gratitude poured over Martha’s face. Sandi wrote the “vital question”: “Do you know that Jesus Christ is your personal Savior?”

The letters were big and bold, “YES.”

Orientation

Today we study about the transforming moment of Christian conversion, the experience of being born again. Unless God gives you a new start with a new heart, all the spiritual disciplines in the world will fall short of the spirituality and relationship with God that your heart hungers for. Nothing less than a life-changing, transforming encounter with Jesus the Savior can deal with the sin that defeats us at every turn.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

To help students

- understand the priority of the new birth in the spiritual life and learn how to help others to find this transforming moment, this life-changing encounter with the Living Lord who can give us a “new start with a new heart”
- appreciate anew their own experience of the saving grace of God, and desire to serve Christ by sharing the “Good News” with others
- gain confidence in their own knowledge of the Scripture and the gospel and in their ability to use that knowledge to bring others to Christ by witnessing during the coming week

Lesson Body

Bible Study: Testimonies of Christian Conversion

(20 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 7-1.

Using Base Groups or other study teams, direct half the class to study Acts 8 and the other half Acts 9. After they have reported their findings and asked their questions, let them compare and contrast.

Note that God is not tied to any one formula setting or procedure to bring about the “transforming moment.”

Two Conversion Stories

Read:

Acts 8:26-40—the conversion of the Ethiopian officer
Acts 9:1-19—the conversion of St. Paul

Compare and Contrast:

In what ways are these conversion accounts alike?

How do they differ from each other and from your personal experience?

What do we learn from Paul, Philip, and the Ethiopian about how to find Christ and how to lead others to a transforming encounter with Him?

John Wesley’s Conversion Testimony

Refer students to Resource 7-2.

The young John Wesley had struggled for years to find peace with God. He had become a priest, a missionary, and an Oxford professor in the process. Yet peace did not come—until May 24, 1738, when—well, let him tell his own story:

I resolved to seek it [salvation by faith alone] unto the end,

1. By absolutely renouncing all dependence . . . upon *my own* works or righteousness; on which I had really grounded my hope, though I knew it not, from my youth up.
2. By adding to the constant use of all the means of grace, continual prayer for this very thing, justifying, saving grace, a full reliance on the blood of Christ shed for *me*; a trust in Him, as *my* Christ, as *my* sole justification, sanctification, and redemption.

I continued thus to seek it, (though with strange indifference, dullness, and coldness, and unusually frequent relapses into sin) till Wednesday, May 24 [1738]. I think it was about five in the morning that I opened my New Testament on those words, “there are

given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4). Just as I went out I opened it again on those words, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” in the afternoon I was invited to go to St. Paul’s. The anthem was, “Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord hear my voice.”

In the evening I went very willingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: And an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. . . . I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart.

From Works, 1:102-103.

Wesley knew the date, time, and place of his “born-again” experience. Note that the Oxford professor, so admirably schooled in logic and reason, found Christ in heartfelt religion. Note the place he gives to the inner “assurance” that God had saved him. Later he would write in a sermon on the “Witness of the Spirit,” “We know . . . that the Spirit of God does give a believer such a testimony of his adoption, that while it is present in the soul, he can no more doubt the reality of his sonship, than he can doubt the shining of the sun, while he stands in the full blaze of its beams.”

Use the questions at the end of Resource 7-2 for discussion.

Guided Sharing: How God Found Me

(25 minutes)

We need not spend all our time comparing old and ancient testimonies about the “transforming moment” of conversion. You have a story to tell, too.

Refer students to Resource 7-3.

Each of you is to answer the questions on Resource 7-3. We will then spend time sharing with each other about our conversion experiences.

Use Base Groups if your class is large enough. If the class is small, take time for everyone to share.

This is a way of reviewing and sharing the transforming moments that class members have experienced. Sharing conversion testimonies takes students back to one of their most precious and powerful moments. As they share they will indeed strengthen each other.

Lecture and Discussion: The Transforming Encounter

(25 minutes)

Students were to bring to class whatever soul-winning or personal evangelism plans they could find. Let them present and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the plans they brought.

One plan is given at right. You can use it if students are unsuccessful in finding resources of this type.

Point out that personal evangelism is just one way to evangelize.

Evangelism will be covered more thoroughly in the module on Evangelism. Therefore, you do not have to cover everything about this topic in this lesson.

Soul-winning Plans

One of the homework assignments was to locate and bring to class whatever “soul-winning plans” you could find.

Here is a summary of *Really Living*, the children’s version of the *Life Can Have Meaning* plan published by the Nazarene Publishing House.

1. God loves you and wants you to really live (Jn 3: 16; Jn 10: 10).
2. Oops!
You can’t—because of sin (sin is disobeying God). For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23).

Say! That means you.
3. What can you do about it? Not a thing . . . by yourself (Eph 2:8-9).

Don’t give up . . .
4. Jesus died for our sins (Rom 5:8).
5. He offers the real life, true life (Rom 6:23; 2 Cor 5:17).
6. So if you really want to live . . . you must repent. What’s that?
 - Admit you have sinned.
 - Feel sorry for your sins.
 - Be willing to quit sinning.
 - Ask God to forgive you (1 Jn 1:9).
 - Receive Christ as your Savior (Rev 3:20).

7. NOW

It's your turn.

Pray in your own words or make these words your own:

Dear Jesus:

I admit I have sinned and I am sorry for what I have done. Please forgive me.

I believe You died for me. I now accept You as my own Savior.

Help me to obey You every day. Thank You for forgiving me and making me Your child. Amen.

Now you can start really living.

Steps Toward the Transforming Moment

Refer students to Resource 7-4. It is a guide for the students to follow as you give the lecture at right. The "prompt" in each of the four boxes: "One thing I could add . . ." is also a tool for discussion following the learning leader's talk.

God is God and His plan of salvation cannot be reduced to a mathematical formula or a recipe for salsa or chocolate cake. But by reading the Scriptures and examining human experience we humbly learn that there are some steps that we can take to put ourselves in the place where God's transforming power can work a miracle of grace. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot make one step in the right direction without God's grace. The transforming power is God's—every bit of it. But we put ourselves in the waterfall of grace with these steps.

Confession

"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way" (Isa 53:6). I guess that includes you and me too, right? This is no time to call sin by a nice name. No pleading "low self-esteem." No hiding behind "maladjustment." No whining "victim." Don't tell God your vicious and immoral behavior happened because Dad didn't take you fishing or because Mom did not read you stories. Don't point fingers at the "system." Remember Adam. When confronted with his sin he first tried to blame others ("The devil and the woman made me do it"). But he finally confessed, "I ate" (Gen 3:13). You and I are not exceptions to God's declaration, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23).

The New Testament word for "confess" is made of two Greek terms. One means "same" or "alike"; the other means "word," "speech," or "idea." The compound word means "to speak alike" or "to say the same thing." To confess your sins then is to speak out your

“agreement with God” on the matter of your spiritual condition.

Forgive unconfessed sin? Not even God can do that! On the other hand, “If we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins” (1 Jn 1:9). Do not fear to confess yourself a sinner. Jesus died for sinners, and no one else.

Repentance

To repent is to turn away from your sins, to utterly renounce them and forsake them in “godly sorrow.”

Oswald Chambers called repentance the “threshold” to the kingdom. John Wesley called repentance the “porch” that leads to a life of intimacy with God.

Repentance is not just the sorrow that you got caught, or that you made a mess of your life. Rather, it involves remorse for sinning against God, and against the very persons to whom you owed your best. The sins that the repentant sinner once prized now appear revolting.

This sounds frighteningly radical—and it is. But it is delightful and fulfilling too. For as you turn from self to God and others, you come to know what Jesus meant when He said, “Whoever wants [seeks] to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it” (Mt 16:25).

When John the Baptizer preached the gospel of repentance, he challenged hearers to “produce fruit in keeping with repentance” (Mt 3:8). One such fruit is repairing the damage that our sin has done to others. If we have stolen money or property, we make restitution by paying it back with interest or damages. If we have abused others, brought suffering because of our addictions, or have injured the good name of others we not only ask forgiveness, we must try to repair the damage unless such efforts would do more harm than good.

Trust in Jesus Alone for Salvation

Recognizing your spiritual poverty, confess your sins, and repent from the bottom of your heart. The next stride is a step of faith. Put all your trust in Jesus Christ. Believe that He loves you as if you were the only one to love. Believe that He died for you, and that God’s saving grace is extended even to a sinner like you.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son . . . to condemn . . . but to save . . . Whoever believes in him is not condemned (Jn 3:16-18).

This final step into right relationship with God is solid, firmly grounded in the gracious promises of God:

- “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and *believe* in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you *believe* and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved” (Rom 10:9-10, emphasis added).
- “To those who *believed* in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (Jn 1:12, emphasis added).
- “Jesus said . . . ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who *believes* in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and *believes* in me will never die’ ” (Jn 11:25, emphasis added).

Will you be accepted? Jesus says: “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If *anyone* hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in” (Rev 3:20, emphasis added).

Receive the Assurance of the Spirit

You will not be prepared for it. You may not know what to say or how to act. But in the process of confessing, repenting and affirming your faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit will give you a deep inner assurance that your sins are forgiven and that you have been born into the family of God.

Becoming a new creation in Christ can be a breath-taking experience. Our descriptions of it are often feeble compared to the experience itself. But once you have received the witness of the Spirit you will give the knowing nod of recognition whenever Romans 8:16 is read at church: “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”

This is an in-class writing assignment. If there is no class time available, make this a homework assignment to be handed in later. Or it could be made a journal prompt.

Each of you are to write a “sinner’s” prayer that includes confession of sin, repentance, affirmation of faith in Christ as Savior and Lord, and includes the acceptance of assurance of salvation.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

The writing assignment at the end of the lecture, the “sinner’s prayer,” calls on students to creatively “review” the lesson.

Look Ahead

Next session we will be considering the transforming moment of “sanctifying grace.”

Assign Homework

Refer students to the Student Guide..

Research:

Begin an annotated bibliography on the Wesleyan-Holiness doctrine of sanctification or holiness. Each student is to find at least five books (or chapters in books) on the subject and at least three magazine or journal articles on the subject. The student is to write a one-paragraph “annotation” that describes the main thrust of the book, chapter, or article. Be sure that such works as the following are included:

- *Love Made Perfect and Wholeness in Christ*, by William Greathouse
- *Entire Sanctification*, J. Kenneth Grider
- *All Loves Excelling*, by John A. Knight
- *Reflecting God* (chapters 9–10), Wesley Tracy, et al.
- For articles check past issues of *Holiness Today* and the *Herald of Holiness*.
- Check also the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (on-line).

Journal Prompt:

Write a one-stanza song of praise to God for your own “transforming moment” of conversion. If you need help to get started, sing some songs such as “Why Should He Love Me So?” “Victory in Jesus,” “All That Thrills My Soul Is Jesus.”

Punctuate the Finish

Joy Paday of Tennessee planned to visit her relatives in Daet, the Philippines. Click, double-click, she was in touch with the missionaries of her denomination in the

Philippines. She wanted to take her relatives there to a holiness church. Bad news, her denomination had no church in Daet. Joy clicked away on the Net until she found out where her denomination did have churches.

Joy and her husband, Nicasio, were not ones to give up easily. They brought Nicasio's brother, Romie Paday, all the way to suburban Manila to attend a Wesleyan heritage church. The church members welcomed the visitors. The singing was happy, even if a little fast and loud. The prayers were fervent—as if they really thought God cared for them—and how the pastor preached!

Romie did not know what to call it, but the Spirit of the Lord came. The altar call found Romie—a man with serious drinking problems and acquainted with jail—pouring out his confession to Christ.

The conversion took. Romie went back home and started a Bible study in his house. Some 80 people attend. Romie tells them, “God gave me a new start with a new heart.” He helped turn his Bible study group into a new church. A recent graduate of Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary became the pastor of the church in Daet, Philippines.

Living in the Philippines can be dangerous given Communist guerrillas, Muslim terrorists, and creeping poverty, homelessness, rampant child prostitution, and rampaging tuberculosis and typhoid. But even in such circumstances Jesus Christ can give you a new start with a new heart. Praise His name.

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Lesson 8

Sanctifying Grace: The Transforming Moment

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide Resource 8-1
0:10	The Transforming Moment of Sanctification	Lecture/Quiz	Resource 8-2 Resource 8-3
0:40	Pooling Resources	Building a Holiness Annotated Bibliography	Homework Resource 8-4
1:00	Steps Toward the Transforming Moment of Sanctification	A Seeker's Guide	Resource 8-5
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Resource 8-6

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

John A. Knight, *All Loves Excelling* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1995), 108-144.

Wesley Tracy et al., *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 39-47.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God*, (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), 77-92.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 51-58.

John Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," *Works*, 6:43-53.

John Wesley, "On Patience," *Works*, 6:484-492.

John Wesley, "Satan's Devices," *Works*, 6:32-42.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- learn to define and explain the key concepts of sanctification as a transforming moment as taught by the Bible, the Wesleyan tradition, and by the experience of God's people
- hunger for sanctifying grace or for progress in holiness
- follow the steps toward sanctification if they have not already experienced the transforming moment of sanctifying grace and/or demonstrate that they have learned how to help other believers who hunger for sanctification and the deeper spiritual life

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Research

Journaling

Assign for next lesson

Bible Study: Read two of these passages:

- The Journey of Abraham, Genesis 12—23; 25:1-11
- The Journey of Joseph, Genesis 37, 39—50
- The Journey of Jonah, Jonah 1—4
- The Journey of Moses, Exodus 1—24

Read these life stories as journeys, as quests, as life stories about what really matters. Note such things as:

- character development
- triumphs and failures
- spiritual lessons learned
- spiritual refinement at work
- the purpose of God at work when the character may not have been aware of it

Make a Lifeline Chart of One of the Bible Characters.

Draw a lifeline that shows the events in his life and the spiritual ups and downs. Be prepared to share your work.

Journal Prompts

- When it comes to being all love, holy love I find myself . . .
- If I had to preach a sermon on sanctification my text would be . . . and the main idea would be . . .
- My own prayer of consecration is . . .
- My deepest hungers are . . .
- The most recent time I prayed with someone who was seeking sanctifying grace was . . .

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Motivator

The Goal of Sanctifying Grace is:

Love the Lord with
all your heart,
all your soul,
all your mind

And love your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 22:37

You may choose to read the entire chapter of 1 Corinthians 13.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. . . If I . . . have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal” (1 Cor 13:4-7, 1).

Refer students to Resource 8-1.

Those who complicate the doctrine of sanctification or reduce it to a lockstep formula should read this more than once:

The “heaven of heavens is love.” There is nothing higher in religion; there is, in effect, nothing else; if you look for anything but more love you are looking wide of the mark . . . And when you are asking others, “Have you received this or that blessing?” if you mean anything but more love, you mean wrong; you are leading them out of the way, and putting them on a false scent. Settle it in your heart, that from the moment God has saved you from all sin, you are to aim at nothing more, but more of that love described in the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians. You can go no higher than this.

From Works, 11:430.

Orientation

The aim of God in sanctification is to make you all love. That is to say, to make you more like God who is holy love.

Sanctification has two dimensions—a transforming moment in which inbred sin is cleansed and the heart is filled with the Holy Spirit of love and an ongoing, lifelong journey of transformation by which we are

changed more and more into the image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18). The holiness people have correctly testified, “I am sanctified and I am being sanctified.”

In today’s lesson we focus on the transforming moment of sanctifying grace.

Learner Objectives

Direct students to the Student Guide.

To help students

- learn to define and explain the key concepts of sanctification as a transforming moment as taught by the Bible, the Wesleyan tradition, and by the experience of God’s people
- hunger for sanctifying grace or for progress in holiness
- follow the steps toward sanctification if they have not already experienced the transforming moment of sanctifying grace and/or demonstrate that they have learned how to help other believers who hunger for sanctification and the deeper spiritual life

Lesson Body

Lecture: The Transforming Moment of Sanctification

(30 minutes)

A new start with a new heart—what could be better. You are a living miracle already. But just when you think it doesn't get any better than this it does!

You discover that the transformation you experienced when you were born again continues. Negative memories are being healed, old resentments are melting away. And you find yourself hungering for more and more of God. This is the Holy Spirit calling you to the blessing of sanctification. "The God of peace [wants to] sanctify you through and through" (1 Thess 5:23).

God wants to drench you in love and set you apart for holy use. This is His loving will for every believer. "It is God's will that you should be sanctified . . . For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life" (1 Thess 4:3, 7).

God has made it His aim to make of you a Christian who is accurately described by

Matthew 22:37

1 Corinthians 13

The Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5—7)

In your comments on the Sermon on the Mount accent the Beatitudes (5:1-12), unconditional love (5:43-48), and giving to the needy (6:1-4).

That is, God's aim is to make you like himself—all holy love.

How Do We Get There from Here?

How does the believer move toward the transforming moment of sanctification? It isn't done by magic, or by rigid formula. It is not easy, for it includes crucifixion of the sinful self and a forsaking of egocentricity in favor of Christ-centered existence.

The Reality of the Transforming Moment of Sanctification

For much more on the scriptural teaching on the instantaneous nature of sanctification see John A. Knight, All Loves Excelling, 108-112.

The Scriptures speak of the act of sanctification (Acts 15:8-9) and the journey of sanctification (2 Cor 3:18). But often the Scriptures do not directly differentiate between the two aspects of sanctification.

It is the experiences (empirical evidence, if you please) of God's people through the centuries that makes us expect that God will cleanse our hearts and fill us with the Holy Spirit in a "twinkling of an eye" experience that once and for all puts Christ on the throne at the center of our being.

The 100 or more denominations in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition didn't make up a second work of grace. We have simply observed that generally this is the way God works in setting us free from inner sin.

John Wesley, over a period of some three years, personally interviewed some 1,000 persons who had found the deeper life of holiness. This is what he found:

Every one of them was exceeding clear in their experience. Every one (after the most careful inquiry) I have not found one exception . . . has declared that his deliverance from sin [entire sanctification] was instantaneous; that the change was wrought in a moment. Had half of these, or one-third, or one in twenty declared it was gradually wrought in them, I would have believed this in regard to them, and thought that some were gradually sanctified and some instantaneously.

But as I have not found, in so long a space of time, a single person speaking thus: as all who believe they are sanctified declare with one voice that the change was wrought in a moment. I cannot but believe that sanctification is commonly, if not always, an instantaneous work.

From "On Patience," Works, 6:491.

In his classic *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* John Wesley said,

The closing section of Wesley's sermon, "The Scripture Way of Salvation" (Works, 6:43-53), can also be used here with profit.

Beyond all possibility of exception . . . my brother and I maintained . . . That this [sanctification] is received merely by faith . . . given instantaneously, in one moment. . . There is a gradual work of God in the soul . . . generally speaking, it is a long time . . . before sin is destroyed. There is a gradual work both before and after that moment [of sanctification].

From Works, 11:393, 423.

The saints in every age have reported a crisis experience of God after conversion that ushered them into the deeper life. The testimony of Billy Graham and of Lloyd Ogilvie come to mind among contemporary well-known Christians who long after conversion found

a place of utter consecration that led to a pivotal deeper experience of God.

The Problem of Inner Sin and the Need for Cleansing

One thing that prevents many believers from finding the deeper life is remaining inner sin.

As you follow the Spirit into the sunrise of sanctifying grace you become more aware of the love and holiness of God. The closer you get to Him, the more your own lack of love and your own unholy attitudes and feelings show up.

Though you have been born again—given a new start with a new heart—and though you have renounced the acts of sin that characterized your former life, you are now forced to admit that though sin does not rule in your heart it does remain.

Inward sin is not something you have, it is something you are. You grieve, for at the deepest level you want to be like Christ. But there's a part of you that treasures lust, or harbors a lurking self-idolatry, or nourishes the need to control, or thirsts for praise, or protects a touchy ego, or affirms a cultural prejudice, or shelters unworthy motives, or rebels against continual obedience to God. A. W. Tozer called these "the hyphenated sins of the human spirit." He named some: "self-sufficiency, self-righteousness, self-love, self-pity, and self-admiration."

From Reflecting God, 79.

The Spirit of the Lord is both tender and firm. Faithfully, He confronts you with your sinful nature. At first you may dismiss His gentle revelations. But He keeps bringing you back to the mirror of the divine Light where you can admit that you need to have your very inmost heart cleansed of sin. You find yourself ready to pray the Wesley hymn "Show me as my soul can bear the depth of inbred sin." If you pray such a prayer, tighten your spiritual seat belt. You may be in for a jolting ride through some sin-stained slums of your inner world that are as ugly as sin.

When that happens do not "cast away your confidence" (Heb 10:35, NKJV). Rather, wrap the robe of faith around you and hold on to God. Think of the wonderful things that God has already done in giving you a new start with a new heart. Do not despair over what God has not yet done for you. You have been born again. To that truth the Spirit bears witness, as does your changed life. Take comfort in these facts.

Wesley's sermon, "Satan's Devices" (Works, 6:32-42) is an excellent enrichment source for this point.

One of Satan's devices is to so bully the believer on the way to sanctification until he or she despairs over remaining sin rather than praise God for the regeneration miracle that He has already wrought.

The Spirit will gently lead you to loving submission to God so that you can be cleansed "from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God" (2 Cor 7:1).

The Need for Self-surrender

The key to the deeper life of holiness is self-surrender. The sinful self must be "crucified" with Christ (Rom 6:6). This is a truth verified by 20 centuries of Christian discipleship.

See "Self-esteem vs. Self-denial," Herald of Holiness, Nov 1989, 2-3, 30. Also see Reflecting God, 88-89, and All Loves Excelling, 113-117 for supporting information.

Those who have experienced it call it self-denial, self-transcendence, self-crucifixion, self-surrender, or, as the saints of the Middle Ages called it, "self-donation."

One researcher reports a study of 200 of the best-known works on Christian spirituality produced over 20 centuries. A common denominator showed up in the experience and writings of the pilgrims in the works studied—self-surrender. This was the case whether the author was a liberal or conservative, modern or ancient, Catholic or Protestant. One woman's 1112-page Ph.D. dissertation summed it up: "The secret to the holy life is self-surrender, always has been, always will be."

Who says this better than our hymn writers?

Charles Wesley

Show me as my soul can bear
The depth of inbred sin;
All the unbelief declare,
The pride that lurks within

Take me whom Thyself hast bought,
Bring into captivity
Every high aspiring thought
That would not bow to Thee.

"Open, Lord, My Inward Ear," Wesley Hymns (Kansas City: Lillenas, 1982), 37.

Frances Ridley Havergal

Take my will and make it Thine—
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart—it is Thine own;
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love—my Lord I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

"Take My Life and Let It Be": Sing to the Lord, 455.

Perhaps you will like this one transliterated from the Pidgin English of the hymnal used by Christians in Papua New Guinea. It has no title; just hymn 119 but is to be sung to the tune of "Have Thine Own Way Lord."

You boss me, God, You boss me.
You are the Papa me pickinini (child).
Suppose me got sin you straighten me.
Me cry long [to] you, you come boss me.

Wewak, Papua New Guinea: Christian Books, Melanesia, 1979.

Given the foundational nature of sanctification in Wesleyan-Holiness thought, it is recommended that the lecture is available to students after you have delivered it.

Refer students to Resource 8-2.

10 Point Jeopardy-Style Quiz

Refer students to Resource 8-3.

Let students work the quiz in study pairs or use Base Groups.

Quiz key:

- 1. What is to be crucified with Christ?*
- 2. What is the "experience" of God's people concerning a second, instantaneous work of grace?*
- 3. Who was John Wesley?*
- 4. What are self-righteousness, self-sufficiency, self-love, self-pity, and self-admiration, according to A. W. Tozer?*
- 5. What is it the Holy Spirit will reveal in searching our hearts?*
- 6. What is to bully the believer over remaining sin until he or she despairs rather than praising God for regeneration?*

From the lecture find the questions that go with these answers.

- 1. The Answer: "The sinful self" of Romans 6:6.**
The Question: _____
- 2. The Answer: "empirical evidence"**
The Question: _____
- 3. The Answer: He wrote *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection***
The Question: _____
- 4. The Answer: "The hyphenated sins of the human spirit"**
The Question: _____
- 5. The Answer: "The sin-stained slums of your inner world"**
The Question: _____
- 6. The Answer: It's one of Satan's devices.**
The Question: _____

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>7. <i>What is 2 Corinthians 7:1?</i></p> <p>8. <i>What is self-surrender?</i></p> <p>9. <i>What is the last line of the song, "Take My Life and Let It Be"? Who is Frances Ridley Havergal? would also be acceptable.</i></p> <p>10. <i>What is the theme of the Pidgin English hymn 119?</i></p> | <p>7. The Answer: This Bible verse says we are to be cleansed from everything that contaminates body and spirit.
The Question: _____</p> <p>8. The Answer: "It is the secret to the holy life; always has been, always will be."
The Question: _____</p> <p>9. The Answer: "Ever, only, all for Thee."
The Question: _____</p> <p>10. The Answer: "You boss me, God."
The Question: _____</p> |
|--|---|

Pooling Resources: Holiness Bibliography

(20 minutes)

Be prepared to add substantially to the sources found by the students. This exercise should provide a good inventory of resources available in your setting—or the lack of them.

According to the size of your class, use Base Groups or general discussion.

If you have more than six students, limit each student's oral report to one source.

Display and refer students to Resource 8-4.

As assigned, each of you was to bring several sources for the annotated bibliography on sanctification that the class is building.

Each of you is to present one or two of the best sources you found. Be prepared to share this information about your selected sources:

1. What is the heart of the issue?
2. What is the issue of the heart?
3. What scriptures does the source use?
4. What idea, in this book or article, was most appealing to you personally?

Seekers' Guide: Steps Toward the Transforming Moment of Sanctification

(20 minutes)

Go over this guide to sanctifying grace with your students. Use a prayerful, devotional tone and be aware that one or more of your class members may need to be led to their own sanctification.

Refer students to Resource 8-5.

With care not to reduce to a dead formula or a code, consider these steps that have led many to the deeper life of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you (Acts 2:38-39).

1. **Know that God calls you to sanctification.** "It is God's will that you should to be sanctified" (1 Thess 4:3). "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. . . . The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it" (1 Thess 5:23-24).

2. **Invite God to prepare your heart.** The Holy Spirit will faithfully lead you to see the depths of inbred sin—that inward sinfulness that wars against the soul even after acts of sin have been forgiven. God will use the deep hunger of your own heart to lead you toward the Light. Yield every sinful attachment that the Spirit points out. When you reach the point where you love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, expect sanctifying grace that cleanses the heart and fills you with the loving Spirit. The promise is sure. “If we walk in the light . . . the blood of Jesus . . . purifies us from all sin” (1 Jn 1:7).
3. **Make your consecration complete.** Make loving submission to Christ a priority. Withhold no secret sin, no dream or ambition. All must go on the altar of consecration. True, God may give you back the noblest of your dreams or aspirations, but you must not cling to them now.
4. **Expect sanctifying grace instantaneously by faith.** You have been growing both in and toward holiness. As the Spirit leads you to say the ultimate “yes” to God, expectantly hope for that moment when He says the second time, “Be clean.” Remember, you cannot earn, demand, or bargain for sanctifying grace, it is a gift, a gift that He has promised to you. He will, in His own time, bestow the purging fire and the fullness of the Spirit.
5. **Patiently follow the hunger of your soul.** If you follow the deepest hunger of your heart, God will lead you into sanctifying grace. Seek with your whole heart, without fretting or tormenting yourself. Resist efforts of zealous people to get you to claim the blessing too soon. You can trust God to give you just what you need from Him. He died to make your sanctification possible. He prayed for your sanctification (Jn 17). It is His will. He calls you to holiness, and the Faithful One will deliver what He promises. Wait patiently for Him.
6. **In faith believing, accept God’s gracious gift of the fullness of the Spirit.** Exercise your faith in your Savior who has already saved you from the guilt and power of sin. Now when He calls you to another level of sonship, trust in Him, lean all your weight upon Him. He alone is able to bring about the transformation you long for.

7. **A prayer for sanctifying grace.** If you are already a believer, and if you feel led by the Spirit to do so, make this prayer your own.

This guide to sanctifying grace is adapted from Reflecting God, 90-92, and is used by permission of Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City.

Oh God, I praise You for all that You have done for me and my brothers and sisters in Christ. Holy is Your name! I now open my heart to its depths before You.

Cleanse by the fire of Your Spirit anything that is unlike Christ. Purge my attitudes, my spirit, and my affections. Consume all my sinfulness.

Fill me with Your love until I love even those who persecute or mistreat me. Make me a flame of holy love.

Take all that is mine—I hold nothing back. I claim no right to my wealth, position, or reputation. I give You my body, my soul, my freedom, and my life. Do with me as You wish. I wish only to know You better and to serve You better all the days of my life. If in Your sovereign will I am ready to receive full sanctification, please bestow that gift on my unworthy heart. If the time is not yet, if there is work yet to be done to prepare me for the fullness of the Spirit, then Lord, help me to wait patiently and give me eyes to see what You are teaching me in order to prepare my heart.

Thank You, Lord, for hearing my prayer. Amen.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Draw a symbol or design that represents the most significant idea that you encountered in class today.

Share with your Base Group by explaining your design or symbol.

A Look Ahead

Next lesson we will explore the second dimension of sanctification. Not the transforming moment, but transformation on the journey. The Spirit, the Bible promises, will guide us into all truth and teach us all things. That will be our theme next class meeting.

Assign Homework

Refer students to the Student Guide.

Bible Study: Read two of these passages:

- The Journey of Abraham, Genesis 12–23; 25: 1-11
- The Journey of Joseph, Genesis 37, 39–50
- The Journey of Jonah, Jonah 1–4
- The Journey of Moses, Exodus 1–24

Read these life stories as journeys, as quests, as life stories about what really matters. Note such things as:

- character development
- triumphs and failures
- spiritual lessons learned
- spiritual refinement at work
- the purpose of God at work when the character may not have been aware of it

Make a Lifeline Chart of One of the Bible Characters.

Draw a lifeline that shows the events in his life and the spiritual ups and downs. Be prepared to share your work.

Journal Prompts:

- When it comes to being all love, holy love I find myself . . .
- If I had to preach a sermon on sanctification my text would be . . . and the main idea would be . . .
- My own prayer of consecration is . . .
- My deepest hungers are . . .
- The most recent time I prayed with someone who was seeking sanctifying grace was . . .

Punctuate the Finish

Make this prayer from John Wesley's hand-written prayer journal your own prayer of loving submission:

Display and refer students to Resource 8-6. Lead the class in offering this prayer.

This prayer is recorded in The Devotional Life of John Wesley by Stephen J. Harper, an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1981, 2:355.

O Lord Jesus,
I give thee my body,
my soul,
my substance [wealth],
my fame,
my friends,
my liberty, and my life:
dispose of me and all that is mine
as it seems best to thee.
I am now not mine, but thine:
therefore claim me as thy right,
Keep me as thy charge, and love me as thy child.
Fight for me when I am assaulted,
heal me when I am wounded,
and revive me when I am destroyed.
Amen.

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Lesson 9

Sanctification: The Transforming Journey

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide Resource 9-1
0:15	A Case Study from Classic Literature	Storytelling/ Discussion	Resource 9-2
0:35	Case Studies from the Bible	Small-Group Work	Homework
0:55	The Case of Solomon and Asmodeus	Storytelling/ Response	Resource 9-3 Resource 9-4
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988), 441-504.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God*, (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), 77-92, 135-44.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 51-58.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- explain some of the ways in which the process of transformation and sanctification continue in the life rhythms of work and rest, endings and beginnings, worship and play
- appreciate the ways in which the sanctifying Spirit is working in the “big picture” of their own lives
- identify some of the refining and perfecting actions of God in their own daily lives
- respond in increased faith and trust in the providence and sovereignty of God

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Bible study
Lifeline chart
Journaling

Assign for next lesson

Bible Study

- Describe in two or three paragraphs your usual method of Bible study. Do not write what you “ought” to do but what you actually do.
- Study the story of Naboth’s vineyard, 1 Kings 21: 1-23.
- Study Ephesians 2: 1-10.

Journal Prompts

- List in your journal: endings, in-between times, and new beginnings that you have experienced in the past 10 years.
- Write a song of praise and thanksgiving that celebrates these transitions and transformations.

Lesson Introduction

(15 minutes)

Motivator

This "Motivator" is longer than usual, but important. Today's lesson is mostly case studies. Therefore, the "Motivator" and "Orientation" sections are crucial so that a proper framework is set to consider the case studies from literature, the Bible, and the legends of ancient biblical times.

Life's rhythms of days and months and years; of morning, noon, and night; of work and rest and play; of endings and new beginnings; and those confusing "in-between" times all become the arena of transformation by the sanctifying Spirit.

As life unfolds, those who have experienced the moments of transformation, saving and sanctifying grace, discover that the process of transformation continues day by day.

The endings in life become the opportunity of the Spirit to "guide" and "teach" us as Jesus promised in John 14:26 and 16:23. Endings happen—the children grow up, a career ends, a marriage fails, a deadly diagnosis changes everything, a job is lost, failure camps on your front step, the divorce becomes final, a beloved one's coma proves final.

Endings hurt. The ending that hurts most is when you yourself turn out to be what you always said, and really believed, you would never be. You see yourself as a loyal friend. Then one day, to save yourself, you betray a friend. You see yourself as the eternally faithful spouse. Then at the conjunction of maximum opportunity and maximum temptation you sin. Your own image of yourself crashes and burns.

It is hard to see the hand of God working to redeem our endings. But the time will come when you can see His loving providence and His sovereignty in those painful endings. No, God did not send those hurtful endings, but He worked through them to sanctify and transform something needed in your character and faith.

After an ending we usually find ourselves lost and disoriented, disengaged and discouraged. One woman said, after an unwanted divorce, "My self-esteem as a woman and as a person was all tied up in his reaction to me. I didn't just lose a husband. I lost a way of evaluating myself. He was my mirror. I don't know how I look anymore."

From Transitions, Wm. Bridges (Perseus Books, 1980), 95.

The empty time between an ending and a new beginning is often called the trapeze stage. You have released the bar, let go of some job, relationship, some dependency, some security and you feel as if you are sailing in midair and the next trapeze bar you hope to grab onto is nowhere in sight.

From Reflecting God, 139.

The “in-between times” are lonely, dark and produce their own sad, romantic music. Your actions are as aimless as a man trying to shovel smoke. You pray but it seems God’s line is busy. The Bible seems to be answering only questions you are not asking. During such aching times of spiritual despair, Archbishop Trent said, “One’s own life is a most unwelcome gift.”

Our instinct is to rush from an ending to a new beginning, but that is usually a mistake. We need time to ache, to admit our failures, to face our fears, to process our grief. During the “in-between times” we taste new possibilities, and even fashion a new identity. Further, wisdom is the honey that the bees of the “in-between times” make. You can’t find it anywhere else.

The trapeze stage can be turned into a time of fertile transformation. St. Paul started out in a frenzy for God. His zeal was good, but he drove everybody crazy. He was such a pain that it was suggested that he leave town. Not on a retreat to the Ozarks, or a vacation in the Bahamas. No, Paul spent years in the Arabian desert in heart-searching prayer. But when Paul walked out of the desert three years later he had been transformed from an obnoxious zealot to a missionary who would plant the gospel in a dozen countries!

Such times of transforming withdrawal can be seen in the lives of Moses, Gregory the Great, Abraham Lincoln, and in the life of Jesus himself.

When the time is right the Spirit leads us out of the desert of the “in-between time” into a new beginning. By this time a lot of sanctifying grace has been absorbed, and you have changed a lot in many ways.

How can you tell when a new beginning is about to happen?

Refer students to Resource 9-1.

The authors of *Reflecting God* suggest several clues, these among them:

- When you get lost enough to find yourself.
- When you have surrendered everything except Jesus. You never know that Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have.

From Reflecting God, 142-144.

- Your unlived life offers a clue. What would be unlived if your life ended today?
- When you have reached a state of mind in which you are willing to give up being special and are ready to settle for merely being useful.
- When you discover where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet, you may be ready for a new beginning.

Through all the endings, in-between times, and new beginnings the transforming Spirit is at work in us. Some call this growth in grace, some gradual sanctification. But whatever the label the sanctifying grace of God is at work. Open your heart to this reality.

Orientation

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NRSV) is the key verse for this lesson and for this whole course. Help your students memorize it.

The transformation of 2 Corinthians 3:18 continues beyond the transforming moments of saving and sanctifying grace.

“All of us with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory.”

That is the process of sanctification.

It isn't as though when you experienced the transforming moment of being filled with the Spirit that you were given a lifetime supply of holiness. If that were the case, you could lock it away in a trunk and “sit back and relax” your way straight into heaven. That's not the plan.

The Wesleyan tradition has always taught that sanctifying grace is a moment-by-moment thing. The cleansing and filling are dynamic, not static. The cleansing of the Spirit goes on in the daily give and take of life. John Wesley called the life of grace spiritual breathing. As we live and breathe life in the Spirit, that breath cleanses and empowers just like oxygen in our physical life. Thus through the rhythms of life the sanctifying Spirit continues His work of transformation and refinement.

The Spirit guides and teaches. He points out to us where our prejudices, unexamined practices and attitudes need cleansing and guiding or eradication. As Charles Wesley sang, “Every moment, Lord, I need the merit of Thy blood.” As He guides us into more truth about ourselves we learn of our lacks and lapses that need the refiner's fire. He reveals to us deep needs that were previously unknown to us. The Spirit

cultivates sensitivities of the things of God that we were ignorant of when we first prayed the sinner's prayer.

This transformation over time is transformation for the journey of life. Today we examine some cases, rather some life stories, in order to notice the transforming Spirit at work in ongoing sanctification.

Learner Objectives

Direct students to the Student Guide.

To help students

- explain some of the ways in which the process of transformation and sanctification continue in the life rhythms of work and rest, endings and beginnings, worship and play
- appreciate the ways in which the sanctifying Spirit is working in the "big picture" of their own lives
- identify some of the refining and perfecting actions of God in their own daily lives
- respond in increased faith and trust in the providence and sovereignty of God

Lesson Body

A Hero's Journey: A Case from Classic Literature

(20 minutes)

Display and refer students to Resource 9-2. Look at the questions before the story is told. You can read the story or have a student read it aloud.

Discussion Prompter

This is not a Christian story, but it is a human story.

1. At what points do you most identify with Odysseus?
2. What endings did he experience?
3. What in-between times and new beginning did he encounter?
4. What character development or transformations did you notice?

Odysseus, Prince of Ithaca

This is a summary of The Odyssey, the Greek epic poem attributed to Homer.

Odysseus, Prince of Ithaca, was the hero of the Trojan War. His victory at Troy was legendary. Praise and plaudits poured like a Niagara over this middle-aged warrior who had a wife and teenage son.

The journey home from Troy should have taken three weeks. But it takes our hero, Odysseus, 10 years. The first delay came at the seacoast village of Ismaros. Odysseus and his 12 ships loaded with celebrating soldiers pulls into the harbor looking for liquor and more loot. The sleepy little town of Ismaros can offer no resistance to the brave victors at Troy—or can it?

The soldiers celebrate too long and get staggering drunk. A group of stone-cold-sober tribesmen acting as an army ambushed the drunken soldiers of Odysseus and sent them limping and bleeding back to their ships.

That is the end of an era in the life of Odysseus. No longer is he conquering hero. He is now a loser, thrashed by an inferior force. Odysseus will never see himself the same again, nor will others. What an ending.

Soon new tests and challenges arise. The Sirens tempt him. But Odysseus has himself lashed to the mast so he cannot yield to their temptations, which surely represent the shadow side of human nature that repeatedly lures people to self-destruction. The lotus fruit temptation is a snare to distract the voyager from

his destination. Odysseus knew he had to make it home. Yet the lotus fruit numbed the mind and painful thoughts of the hard journey and his wife, Penelope, could be put aside—at least for the moment. Another temptation was the honey-sweet promise of Calypso who cooed, “Stay with me and you need never grow old.” It’s an old lie, but we still take the bait. We buy red sports cars, starve ourselves slim, and dye our hair as if we could stop the process of life and all its transitions.

At another point in the journey Odysseus and his men are trapped in a cave by the Cyclops, Polyphemus, who dines on two of the soldiers each time he gets hungry. The name Polyphemus means “famous.” Odysseus was in conflict with Mr. Famous. He is never able to escape until he takes the name Oudeis, which means “Nobody.” So the battle of wits and survival is joined between “Famous” and “Nobody.” Giving up his old identity, Odysseus cleverly uses his “Nobody” name to escape and survive. Going from hero to nobody gave Odysseus a new beginning.

Odysseus goes through a constant streak of losses on his way home. His 12 ships are soon reduced to six and then to three. Finally he is left alone with just one ship. A decisive danger now confronts our hero. He must sail between Scylla the monster and Charybdis the whirlpool. This represents the “between a rock and a hard place” choices that overtake us all on our journey soon enough.

Circe tries to warn Odysseus, but he knows how to face danger. He is no coward; he knows how to fight. He puts on the famous coat of armor he had worn at his glorious victory at Troy. Then he takes a long spear in each hand and stands ready on the deck of his last ship. What a pathetic sight he makes. Standing armed to the teeth in iron ready to attack a whirlpool!

Odysseus has passed the warrior stage. The day for sword and spear heroism has passed. Today’s battle requires something different. But there he stands, pathetically trying to fight today’s battles with yesterday’s weapons. Once a warrior, and a good one, he tries to go back to that even though the time for such fighting is long since over. How like him we are. How many parents are armed against the sins of their youth? How many preachers are trying to solve the temptations that ran rampant in their long-passed youth? It’s like preaching on dancing while stem cell research, germ warfare, poverty, cloning, and genocide clutter our moral landscape.

Odysseus and his spears lose. His last ship is sucked down and ripped to pieces by Charybdis the whirlpool. He has been stripped of everything he depended on. But as his ship goes down he grabs a branch of an overhanging fig tree.

We feel like he must have felt when the bankruptcy court rules, when a beloved spouse dies, when the divorce becomes final, when a life-threatening diagnosis is delivered, or when a disabling injury leaves us hanging by a twig. The whirlpool spits up a chunk of Odysseus' ship. He drops down on the piece of wreckage and paddles with his hands out to sea.

The one-time prince and conquering hero leaves the scene like a child clinging to a log.

Finally, he makes it home to his wife and son. But the journey has changed him, transformed him in important ways.

Case Studies from the Bible

(20 minutes or more)

The students were to study two of these four "life stories."

Further, each student was to create a spiritual map and timeline chart for the life story of one of the four.

Use Base Groups or some other small-group arrangement to start. Circulate among the groups as they work.

This exercise is flexible. Decide how much time you want to give to it in light of the other activities.

Select one (or more, depending upon the amount of time you wish to spend on this activity) student who is especially well prepared and ask him or her to present and explain his or her spiritual map and timeline of the Bible character he or she studied.

Discuss the Homework Assignment

As part of your homework you were to study one of four Bible characters: Abraham, Joseph, Jonah, or Moses.

In small groups discuss the subjects in terms of endings, in-between times, and new beginnings.

A Legend: The Case of Solomon and Asmodeus

(30 minutes)

As told by Wesley Tracy

Read this story to the class or recruit two “designated readers” to read each major section. Decide ahead of time what you want to do with the “Application Points” in this column throughout the story.

If you tell the story yourself, you can add the “application points” whenever you wish. If you have student readers, insert the application points at the pauses between readers as each main section is read.

The Story of Solomon and Asmodeus

Solomon was the wisest king of all, the wisest of the wise. God had given him the gift of wisdom and a ring with a six-pointed star that bore the secret name of God: “I AM.”

But when it came to building the Temple of God, wise Solomon had a problem. The Torah, the Law, strictly forbade the use of iron tools in building an altar to the Most High God. I mean, it is right there in the same chapter as the 10 Commandments—Exodus 20:25 says no iron tools. That’s why 1 Kings 6:7 says, “No hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site.”

So how could Solomon cut the huge stones for the construction of the Temple? His counselors reminded him that Moses had used the shamir. The shamir, a tiny creature, was so small that it could hardly be seen, but it had the power to cut through any substance on earth except lead. The shamir could, for example, cut stones on a cliff and make grooves in which, incredibly, plants and flowers manage to grow out of solid rock. You have seen the work of the shamir, haven’t you?

But the shamir was under the protection of Asmodeus, the chief of demons. He lived in the “mountains of darkness” along with many other demons including three dozen female spirits called the “36 elements of darkness.” There Asmodeus, the king of demons, dwelt. By his house was a large well filled with the coolest water to be found in that desert land. Each day Asmodeus would drink from his well and then seal it tight so no other could use up his water.

Solomon, the wisest of the wise, came up with a plan. He sent his faithful man Benaiah, son of Jehoiada to the mountains of darkness. Asmodeus was away in another land causing mischief, so Benaiah quickly drained the well and refilled it with the strongest wine.

Asmodeus returned thirsty from causing strife in a distant desert land. When he saw that his well was filled with wine he was furious. The legend says that at first he refused to drink quoting in his rage the Bible verses that warn against winebibbing. Wine dulls the

senses and a world-class demon must keep his wits about him. But, being a demon keeping the Holy Scriptures was not on his top ten list. He soon gave in and quaffed several buckets full of wine and fell into a drunken stupor.

Solomon's men then bound the drunken demon in chains and carted him back to Solomon's court in Jerusalem. Solomon demanded that Asmodeus turn over the shamir.

"I do not carry the shamir around with me," said Asmodeus. "It is under the care of the hoopoe, the most worthy of birds. The hoopoe promised God that it would protect the shamir with its life. So you'll not be able to get it."

Solomon explained to his men that the hoopoe had custody of the shamir. When in his flights this "most worthy of birds" saw an ugly or barren craggy mountain cliff that needed the decoration or life of vines or flowers the hoopoe would take the shamir and split the cliff. Then it would bring seeds of vines, trees, and flowers in its beak and plant new life on a barren boulder.

Solomon had his men find the nest of the hoopoe. They covered it with glass. When the hoopoe returned and discovered that she could not feed her young, she quickly flew away and brought the shamir and it shattered the glass in a second.

But Solomon's men began to throw rocks at the hoopoe, and she dropped the shamir. Solomon's men quickly grabbed it, put it in a lead box, and headed for Jerusalem. The hoopoe, having failed in its duty to keep the shamir safe, committed suicide.

But what did Solomon care, he now had the tool to cut the stones and the House of God could be built.

Asmodeus then said to Solomon, "You have the shamir, so why do you leave me in these chains. Let me go; set me free."

Solomon replied, "I will let you go on one condition. You must tell me the secret of your power. You, the chief of demons, rule kingdoms far and near. What is the secret of your power?"

Asmodeus, trying to hide a sly smile on his demon face, muttered, "Take off these chains, give me your

ring that bears the secret name of God, and I will gladly show you the secret of my power.”

Solomon, the wisest of the wise, agreed. He quickly unchained the demon, slipped the ring off his finger and dropped it into the palm of Asmodeus, “Now keep your word,” he demanded, “and show me the secret of your power.”

Asmodeus instantly swelled to enormous stature with one wing that touched the ground and one that reached up into the clouds. He sucked up Solomon in his mouth and spit him out into a wilderness land 400 parasangs (about 1,500 miles) distance from Jerusalem. Asmodeus then threw the ring with the secret name of God on it far out into the ocean.

Application Point: *A lot of wilderness journeys start when we try to make a deal with the devil. Maybe you think you can be a Christian and still nourish that secret sin. A long hard desert journey may await you.*

Lost in the Desert

Solomon wandered lost and hungry in the wilderness. He had to beg bread to stay alive. He became emaciated, dirty, and ragged. To those he met he would pitifully say, “I am Solomon. King was I in Jerusalem.” But the people only laughed.

“I am Solomon, king was I in Jerusalem.” But the village children made fun of him and set their dogs on the tattered old beggar.

Application Point: *At some time on the journey of transformation we have to look squarely at what we really are. That can be scary.*

One day Solomon came upon a pool of water and looking in saw his reflection. His own image frightened him. It was scary for Solomon, technically the king, but what he saw in the reflecting pool was a wild man, a starved man, a beggar. There was no regal bearing, no noble, kingly air, no crown—and no ring that bore the secret name of God. “I am Solomon,” he called out at the top of his voice to himself, “king was I in Jerusalem.” And he trembled as those empty words echoed back to him in that lonely valley.

For years Solomon wandered, bereft, hungry, lost, trying to find his way home. Empty, humbled, impoverished he roamed on looking for Jerusalem the city of God, never forgetting that he had once been king.

He prayed to God but got only the echo of his own voice. It seemed that God was gone. God’s gifts were gone—the ring, the throne, the wisdom. But it was not God who had deserted Solomon. What had deserted

Solomon was his false image of God. He thought that he was so great that God would wink at his sins, his pride, his building shrines to the idols of his many wives, his deals with the devil. Solomon depended on his power—he was fiercely jealous of it. He depended on his fabulous wealth. But here in the desert he had no wealth and he had no power.

Application Point: *M. Craig Barnes says, “Don’t expect Jesus to save us by teaching us to depend on the things we are afraid of losing. He loves us too much to let our health, marriage, or work become the savior of our lives. He will abandon every crusade that searches for salvation [in] anything or any one other than God. He watches as we race down dead-end streets. He lets our mission du jour crash and burn” (When God Interrupts, [IVP, 1996], 124).*

Barnes knows what he is talking about. He was called to pastor the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC. The pastoral interviews were very thorough. The board members knew exactly what kind of pastor they wanted. He had a fine résumé. He was a man of talent, achievement, vision, and most of all hard work.

He accepted the call and plunged into the work. Then there was this lump on his neck. Cancer in the thyroid gland.

Three surgeries later the doctors were optimistic about getting it all. He wrote, “I had always cherished my capacity for hard work. I had long assumed that I got every academic degree, every promotion, every position because I was willing to work harder than anyone else. But that was an offense against God’s grace. It was idolatry, and God set out to save me from it.

I was ready to step into the greatest professional challenge of my life. All I was missing was my thyroid—the gland that regulates energy (91).

So Solomon wandered helpless in the desert stripped of the wealth and the power and the wisdom that had been his very identity, the very things he depended on most—gone. Solomon would second the motion of St. Paul who thought sure he was going to die for his faith and was brought to the point of utter hopelessness. Why? Paul—the Ph.D., the member of the supreme court, the resourceful missionary—said it was so he would learn to depend on God and not on himself (2 Cor 1:9).

Meanwhile Back at the Ranch . . .

As soon as Asmodeus had disposed of Solomon—spitting him 400 parasangs from relevance—he took over Solomon’s throne. He took on the appearance, voice, crown, and throne of Solomon. The people had no clue that their king was gone and that the devil ruled in Jerusalem, the City of God.

Application Point: *This is an entertaining story, but don't take the devil lightly. If even Solomon, the wisest of the wise, could be deceived, what about you and me?*

And that is the genius of the devil, says philosopher, Jacob Needleman. He can deceive us by taking on the very appearance, voice, and garb of the true self, the self that is made in God's image, the self that wears the signet ring with the secret name of God engraved on it. The false, sinful self can rule wearing the king's clothes. Sounds like Solomon—but he really is Asmodeus.

Asmodeus looked like Solomon. He wore Solomon's robe, he carried himself like Solomon when he mounted the throne as the seven heralds dutifully called out their assigned lines, which were seven warnings for the king not to betray the trust put in him.

Asmodeus walked just like the true king and stepped by the golden ox, lion, wolf, lamb, the leopard, the goat, the eagle and the peacock, the falcon and the rooster, the hawk and the sparrow—all the solid gold animals and birds that decorated the lofty throne of Solomon. He walked like Solomon, sounded like Solomon, looked like Solomon—must be Solomon!

So what if some of his judgments and actions seemed strange—which lowly subject would challenge the wisdom of Solomon, who was, after all, the wisest of the wise?

Asmodeus, acting as Solomon, the legend says, committed three grievous sins.

1. He procured a thousand wives and concubines. He could engage in a different dalliance every day for three years! No Jewish king should behave like that, the wise men said—but then Solomon was the wisest of them all.
2. He acquired many horses, and heaps and heaps of silver and gold. (Today we would say cars and stocks and bonds.)
3. He enslaved people to make them build the house of God, the Temple. Know who Solomon enslaved? Ethnic minorities—nope, I'm not making this up; it's right there in the Bible! All the non-Jew males were recruited and enslaved, a sort of holocaust in reverse! Think about that—enslaving people to build God's house.

The false king acted in sexual excess, in grabbing riches, in seizing more power. Even more succinctly, the masked sins were lust, greed, and power—an unholy trinity that will destroy any of us. If the false

self, the unsanctified self, rules in us, —even if he is dressed for church—the same sins will rule, maybe in disguise.

Solomon's Journey Home

The years go by as Solomon tries to find his way home. Solomon, once king, now beggar finally gets a job—good sign—the one-time king is now a dishwasher in the kitchen of the King of Ammon. He is soon promoted to cook and meets the king's daughter, Princess Naamah, as he serves her a spinach soufflé or maybe it was crème brûlée. Her name means "The Lovely" or "The Lovely One." At any rate Princess Lovely likes the food and loves the cook. And Solomon is nuts about her too. They fall in love. She is determined to marry the cook; her father the king is determined that she will not. When the lovers will not take "no" for an answer the king orders them executed. In the end the king moderates his anger and exiles them penniless in a wilderness of a land far away.

Application Point: *Isn't that the way it goes? Solomon is lost then he gets a job, a promotion, and Princess Lovely falls for him. Looks like his troubles are over. Then the bottom falls out again. He is right back in the wilderness but this time it's worse. He has no job, no house, no money, but he does have a bride! The only thing worse than being broke is being broke with a penniless bride on your hands!*

Solomon and Naamah struggle through many trials. Then, near the end of his three-year journey, Solomon and Naamah wander near the seashore. There, fishermen are selling their catch. Solomon has one coin left. He approaches a fisherman and offers him his last coin for a large fish flopping in the basket. The fisherman looks at the coin. Solomon's own crowned head is engraved upon it. But Solomon doesn't point that out anymore. He doesn't look like a king and no one has bowed to him in three years. The fisherman examines the coin and laughs out loud. Not enough to buy that fish. He pockets the coin, pulls a smaller fish out of the basket and shoves it toward Solomon.

Solomon takes the fish to Naamah and they prepare for what may be their last meal. As the good wife opens the fish she sees something sparkling. "Look, Solomon, my husband—a ring!"

Solomon looks and recognizes the ring that God had given him, the ring with the six-pointed star engraved with the secret name of God. The very ring that Asmodeus threw into the ocean three years earlier. For three long years Solomon has been trying to tell others, "I am Solomon. King was I in Jerusalem." Now he puts on the ring and declares, "I am Solomon. King am I in Jerusalem." The legend says that the regal

glory returned to his face and that he stood before Naamah like a sturdy cedar. Though he was still dressed in beggar's rags it was plain that he was the king and the son of a king.

Principal sources for the story are Ginzberg, Legends of the Jews, IV, 123-75. Jacob Needleman, Money and the Meaning of Life, audio book, tapes 2 and 3.

Philosopher Jacob Needleman, in the book *Money and the Meaning of Life*, says, "I too am Solomon, remembering that I was once a king, but having lost the gift, the ring with the secret name of God, I wander lost, impoverished, empty while the false self sits on the inner throne. But when the ring of God, the gift of God's grace is found, I become king. And the true self, engraved with the very secret name of God, ascends the throne.

Solomon now knew his way home. He marches straight to Jerusalem. Showing his ring finger he confronts Asmodeus the chief of demons. As soon as the demon sees the ring with the secret name of God he quickly surrenders and flees to the "mountains of darkness."

If we were to write that ending, we would describe some cataclysmic battle, some fierce struggle, the clashing of war chariots, a gladiatorial win for Solomon, maybe a dramatic sword fight worthy of *Crouching Tiger; Hidden Dragon*.

But the legend is wiser than we are. There is no battle. In the presence of the true self, bearing the signet ring of the Most High God, the false self who has been ruling in the heart with lust, greed, and power-grabbing simply flees. That is to say: when the heart is truly open to the grace and dominion of God, transformation happens and the false self flees away like Asmodeus heading far away to the mountains of darkness on the double. There is no room for greed, lust, and power-grabbing (or any of their cousins) in the transformed heart. It is as John Wesley described it, "Love expelling sin."

The students do have a copy of the legend in Resource 9-3.

Response: A Three-Sentence Paper

Refer students to Resource 9-4.

Assign and collect the three-sentence papers. Read them carefully, they will contain clues about many things, including how you can best help each student.

Your assignment right now is to write a three-sentence paper. Your first sentence begins:

"I, too, am Solomon, for I . . ."

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Allow the students an opportunity to respond.

If you had to write an article for a Christian magazine on the issues of today's lesson, what would the title be?

What would be two of your main points?

Looking Ahead

Next lesson we begin Unit 3, in which we study the personal disciplines and devotional skills needed for the holy life. The skills and disciplines are not the spiritual life itself, but the practices that have proven in the past to keep the soul turned upward toward God ready to receive showers of blessing and the rains of the Spirit.

Assign Homework

Refer students to the Student Guide.

Bible Study

- Describe in two or three paragraphs your usual method of Bible study. Do not write what you "ought" to do but what you actually do.
- Study the story of Naboth's vineyard, 1 Kings 21: 1-23.
- Study Ephesians 2: 1-10.

Journal Prompts

- List in your journal endings, in-between times, and new beginnings that you have experienced in the past 10 years.
- Write a song of praise and thanksgiving that celebrates these transitions and transformations.

Punctuate the Finish

Back of almost every proverb in the Book of Proverbs there is a story that ends with “and that is why Solomon wrote the proverb.” It is said that the mythical clash with the demon Asmodeus prompted Solomon to write

Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge Him
And He will direct your journey.
paraphrase of Proverbs 3:5-6

Lesson 10

Three Ways to Read the Bible

For Unit 3, Introduction and Objectives, see Resource 10-0

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Reading for Information	Quiz/Bible Study	Resource 10-1 Resource 10-2
0:25	Reading for Transformation	Prayer/Bible Study	Resource 10-3
0:40	Formative Reading	Instruction/Bible Study	Resource 10-4 Resource 10-5 Resource 10-6 Resource 10-7
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

Mel Lawrenz, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 56-67.

Everett Leadingham, ed., *Discover the Word* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1997), 49-60, 83-90, 104-35.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), 103-10.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 67-75.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*, 27-29.

Morris Weigelt, et al., *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 69-80.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- define and explain the significance of reading the Bible for information, transformation, and formation
- appreciate the privilege and need of making balanced Bible study a lifelong pursuit
- devise a personal plan for ongoing, balanced study of the Bible

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Description of Bible study method
Journaling

Assign for next lesson

Bible Study Plan

Devise a two-week plan for your daily personal Bible study. Cite the books or passages to be studied. Be sure that the plan includes:

- informational, transformational, and formative elements—label the three elements
- the tools, aids, and methods that you will use

Journal Prompt

In your journaling time record your reflections on the three most significant times of Bible study that you have experienced in the past year. Be specific. State the passage, the setting, others who may have shared the experience, and how your life and/or ministry have changed because of those experiences.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Have the students get in pairs to share their Bible study method from the homework assignment.

Return and collect homework.

Motivator

“This Boy Will Go Far”

Niki loved candy. Gooney nougats, orange slice jells, lollipops, chocolate bars—he loved them all. But times were hard in the neighborhood in which Niki grew up. Bread was hard to come by, let alone candy.

But Niki had a plan, and a special source for candy. Every Sunday, the priest would give candy as a prize to the boy who memorized the most Bible verses. Niki was a bright boy. He studied the Bible hard. And almost every Sunday, he won the sweet, sweet candy prize.

“This boy will go far,” the priest would say to Niki’s mother. “He is storing the Word of God in his mind.” The good priest believed that if you memorized the scriptures, you had learned them. So he stressed memorizing Bible verses. Besides the regular Sunday competitive recitations, he scheduled Bible quoting meets the way some people do spelling contests or basketball tournaments. If you had to give out candy to get boys to memorize scripture, then you gave out candy—peppermint sticks, caramels, jelly beans, and for the tournament winner, a big bag of mixed candy.

So Niki worked hard. He memorized the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians. For one tournament, he recited the whole Gospel of John, having to be prompted only four times. “This boy will go far,” the priest said. “He is storing up the Word of God in his mind.”

Well, the good priest was halfright. The boy did go far. In fact, he became the number one leader of his country—Communist Russia. You see, the boy who memorized all the Bible verses, the boy I have called Niki, was better known as Nikita Khrushchev. Under his rule, God was outlawed, preaching was illegal, and people were forbidden to read the Bible.

*David Knaile
(Used by permission of the author.)*

Nikita Khrushchev had memorized the scriptures. But had he really learned the scriptures? At what level had he learned them—Information? Transformation? Formation?

Orientation

Niki's story demonstrates that a balanced approach to Bible study is needed. It is not enough just to get "information" from the Bible. Even memorizing content does not mean that formation or transformation will occur.

Reading for information is important. Informative reading concerns the content of the Bible, the facts about the Bible and its background in a particular historical setting. But just getting the history straight, memorizing facts, or reading the Bible to win an argument is not enough. In fact, reading for information alone is a misuse of and a disservice to the Holy Scriptures.

*Quoted by Mel Lawrenz, The
Dynamics of Spiritual Formation,
64.*

Reading for transformation must enter into our study of the Holy Scriptures. We must submit ourselves to the text, letting it enter into us and cleanse our hearts. Reading for information is an effort to master the text; reading for transformation is letting the text master us. Richard Fisher says that this is the kind of reading in which "the mind descends into the heart, and both are drawn into the love and goodness of God."

Closely related to transformation is reading for formation. Formative reading is devotional reading for spiritual growth. The goal is to permit the image of Christ to be formed in you through study and meditation.

In this week's lesson we explore each of these three essential forms of Bible study.

Learner Objectives

Refer students to the Student Guide.

To help students

- define and explain the significance of reading the Bible for information, transformation, and formation
- appreciate the privilege and need of making balanced Bible study a lifelong pursuit
- devise a personal plan for ongoing, balanced study of the Bible

Lesson Body

Quiz and Bible Study: Reading for Information

(15 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 10-1.

Have fun with your class as they answer this content quiz. The answers are: 1—C; 2—E; 3—F, B, D, E, A, C; 4—A; 5—B; 6—C; 7—C.

Students will cover the bases in biblical content, types of literature, social settings, time lines, canonical concerns, etc., in the basic Bible courses provided in other classes in the Modular Course of Study. Therefore, spend most of your time in this lesson on reading for transformation and formation. These are the prime concerns of spiritual formation and devotional disciplines.

As useful as the information covered by the quiz might be, the review of it did little for them spiritually. Reading for information is usually about mastering the facts, not devotion and spiritual growth.

Bible Quiz

- Where can you find the Ten Commandments in the Bible?
_____A. Genesis 4 _____C. Exodus 20
_____B. Psalm 84 _____D. Acts 2
- Which of the following does not belong in this list?
_____A. Micah _____D. Joel
_____B. Hosea _____E. Jeremiah
_____C. Amos _____F. Nahum
- Arrange these persons in order of their appearance on the stage of history.
_____A. Blind Bartimaeus _____D. Moses
_____B. Esau _____E. Solomon
_____C. Philemon _____F. Abraham
- Huppim, Muppim, and Ard were
_____A. Sons of Benjamin _____C. Brothers of Jesus
_____B. Daughters of Jethro _____D. Disciples of Elijah
- Which covenant came first?
_____A. Davidic _____C. Mosaic
_____B. Abrahamic _____D. Messianic
- Where would you find the "Love Chapter"?
_____A. Song of Songs 3 _____C. 1 Corinthians 13
_____B. Luke 5 _____D. John 17
- The Beatitudes are found in
_____A. Proverbs 30 _____C. Matthew 5
_____B. Isaiah 53 _____D. Hebrews 11

Naboth and His Vineyard: 1 Kings 21

We are going to look at the story of Naboth as recorded in 1 Kings 21.

- What are the moral or ethical questions?
- What are the legal questions?
- What are the personal questions?
- What are the political questions?
- What are the theological or religious questions?

A matter of *information* affects the answers to all the above questions. Without the information one struggles to make sense of Naboth's story. Beyond the obvious

ethical questions, the story has powerful legal, political, and religious significance.

In ancient kingdoms around Israel the king owned the land as well as everything and everybody on it. In Israel, however, the King was the Lord, Yahweh. The land belonged to Him. This did not change when Israel clamored for a king. Yahweh still owned the land, not Saul, the newly anointed king. Indeed, Israel did not call their early monarchical rulers “kings,” they were called “heads.” Part of the fine-print distinction was that the land, the sacred land, belonged to God and not the king.

All Israel knew that God was the true King and Owner of the land. God’s land was subdivided to every household in Israel. Lest anyone forget to whom the land really belonged, the farms were redistributed by drawing, every seven years. Let’s say that a certain township had 50 farms. The family who worked farm number 12 for a period of seven years at the next drawing might draw farm 39 or 18 or any other number. The homestead a family drew could not be sold because it did not belong to the family. It belonged to God, and seven years in the future another family would work that farm. Not even the king could own land permanently.

The Greek historian Herodotus, along with other scholars, noted this rotating system of land tenure. It was a noble idea, but the plan got in trouble when David took the throne. David faced a tough job when he united the shattered kingdom of Saul. He hired Egyptian managers and mercenary soldiers from Crete and Philistia. But David had no money. He paid off his debts by giving the foreign debtors permanent land grants in Israel. They chose the best land and they did not have to submit to the seven-year rotation plan, either.

It was not long before the Hebrew kings started keeping land as if it belonged to them personally. Soon the land grab was on. By hook or by crook one schemer after another pushed the common people off their land and took permanent possession of it, forcing the poor into debt and slavery. Prophets like Micah and Isaiah thundered warnings: “Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field” (Isa 5:8, KJV). But if the foreigners got to keep their land the Hebrews were bound and determined to own land too.

Almost everyone forgot the old seven-year rotation of land that signified the covenant with Yahweh, the true

See *The Preacher’s Magazine, MAM*, 1981, 18-22.

Point out that though reading for transformation and formation are the main concerns of spirituality, information is important too.

King and Owner. Only a few conservatives, a few religious throwbacks to the covenant even worried at all about God as Owner. Among those who did remember was Naboth. When Ahab, the “head” not “king” of Israel, wanted to buy it, Naboth refused. He was not being hardheaded. He was standing up for the covenant with God. “Ahab, I couldn’t sell you this land if I wanted to. It is not mine to sell; it belongs to God. And furthermore, Mr. Head, not King, you have no legal right under God’s law to be trying to buy this land or any of the other land you have been buying up.”

Naboth’s challenge was a legal, political, and religious challenge. But more than that he challenged a worldly system that was making Ahab rich. Ahab’s plan clashed with the covenant. Ahab didn’t care, but Naboth thought it was about time someone stood up for God and His law. And that is why Naboth died. He wouldn’t acknowledge Ahab as a true king or as a legitimate buyer.

Pose these questions to the class.

In what ways does this “information” affect your understanding, teaching, devotional use, and preaching of 1 Kings 21?

In what ways does it shed light on your previous understanding and feelings about this Bible event?

Reading for Transformation: Isaiah 57:13-15

(15 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 10-3. Explain the exercise carefully. The mood should be devotional, worshipful.

Go through this devotional exercise yourself ahead of time. Then, prayerfully and slowly, lead the class through these steps. Feel free to change the author’s “prayer/meditation” sections to prayers of your own.

Examine the prayer/meditation sections for key words that may indicate that transformation may be occurring.

Lectio divina is Latin for divine reading. Today it is called “spiritual reading” or “reading for holiness.” You come to *lectio* (pronounced *lexio*) *divina* with an open heart. You are not trying to master history, win a doctrinal argument, justify your past behavior, get a sermon, or get today’s chapter read. You are simply presenting your open mind and heart to the Lord before the Scripture. For centuries Christians have found that this sort of reading “cleanses the soul.” Thus the label, “reading for holiness.”

Read giving varying emphases to different words—let them soak into your soul. As led by the Spirit, offer a meditation or prayer—written, spoken, or wordless. Notice that Bible study and prayer merge and blend and flow from one to the other.

Note the sequence of **Text**, **Emphatic Repetition**, and **Meditation/Prayer**. The whole passage is not restated in the text selections; only the parts that the Spirit put into italic for the creator of this exercise are included.

The meditations or prayers are those of the author of this exercise. But the last meditation/prayer section is blank. Fill it with your own meditation. You may then wish to go back to the other verses and add your own prayers or meditations

Text:

“When you *cry out* for help, let your collection of *idols save you!* The *wind* will carry all of them off; a *mere breath* will blow them away” (v. 13).

Emphatic Repetition:

When you *cry out* for help, let your collection of *idols save you!* The *wind* will carry all of them off; a *mere breath* will blow them away.

Meditation/Prayer:

O God, have I set up idols in my soul? Have I taken the deepest hungers of my heart to idols for satisfaction? Do I turn to praise, achievement, worldly possessions to satisfy the hunger for God? Break down every idol, O Lord. Help me depend only on You. My idols are playthings of the wind.

Text:

“The man who makes me his refuge will inherit the land and possess my holy mountain” (v. 13).

Emphatic Repetition:

The man who makes *me his refuge* will inherit the land . . . The man who makes me [God] his *refuge* will *inherit the land* and *possess my* [God’s] holy mountain.

Meditation/Prayer:

O my God, be my Refuge, my safe place. You are my safe place. But why do I seek You, my Refuge, so seldom? Make me hunger for Your land, long for Your holy mountain. May I thirst for You, My Refuge.

Text:

“This is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: ‘I live in the high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite’” (v. 15).

Emphatic Repetition:

I live, *I live* . . . with him who is *contrite*.

I live, I live . . . with him who is *lowly in spirit*.

The high and lofty One . . . whose *name is holy* . . . lives with the contrite.

To [in order to] *revive the spirit of the lowly* . . .

To [in order to] *revive the heart of the contrite*.

Meditation/Prayer:

If it seems appropriate to your setting, ask for volunteer sharing of the prayer/meditations that your class members write in response to verse 15.

A similar but longer exercise of reading for transformation is found in the Reflecting God Workbook, 73-74.

Formative Reading

(40 minutes)

Discover the Word, a *Dialog Series* book from Nazarene Publishing House/Beacon Hill Press, develops a whole chapter around these seven principles. Read chapter 5 as reference or assign a student or small group to read it and present their findings in this part of the lesson. However, the formational concerns should get most of your attention in this activity.

Refer students to Resource 10-4.

Foundations for Bible Study

Formative Bible study, as used in this course, embraces both informational and transformational concerns and practices. On the **informational** side, it endorses Tremper Longman’s seven principles of Bible study.

1. Look for the biblical author’s intended meaning.
The meaning of the text doesn’t change, and this should be determined before one starts making applications to one’s own life.
2. Read the Bible passage in context.
Is the text you are studying a transition, introduction, summary, or is it the second point of three that the author is making on a broader theme?
3. Identify the type of passage you are reading.
Philippians 2:6-11 is a hymn. Micah 3:9-12 is a doom saying. The type of literature makes a difference.
4. Consider the historical and cultural setting.
The Naboth story illustrates the importance of this.

5. Consider the grammar and structure within the passage.
If you run into a “therefore” see what it is “there for.”
6. Interpret experience in the light of Scripture, not Scripture in the light of experience.
Otherwise you are likely to be reading your own ideas into the Bible.
7. Always seek the full counsel of Scripture.

If a passage you are considering seems obscure or unclear, check out what the rest of the Bible has to say on this theme. Bible concordances, dictionaries, and commentaries are helpful in this and in many other ways.

Objective as it is, however, the Bible is not a “paper pope” from which we can extract infallible judgments every time we need to win an argument or a doctrinal debate. Early Protestants, who had just excommunicated the real pope, were tempted to make of the Bible a paper pope with which to hit each other over the head. What a trivialization of the divine revelation!

On the **formative** side of the equation we have other considerations. Informational reading is linear. The reader covers as much material as possible. It has, according to Robert Mulholland, a problem-solving mentality that drives us to be judgmental and analytical. Formational reading, however, is reading in depth to capture the dynamic of the message. Speed is not nearly as important as openness to the mystery of God in the Word. The approach is humble, detached, willing, and loving. It is a relational rather than a functional approach. As in transformational reading, we invite the text to master us rather than trying to master the text, win a debate, or get a sermon.

From Shaped by the Word, Upper Room, 1985.

The informational and formational aspects work to keep us from imbalance. The devotional life is subjective by nature. Add to that our cultural intoxication with individualism that says that truth is different for each of us and you have a lot of private and improper interpretation of Scripture.

Bible study that begins with me and my felt needs is not legitimate. We must first establish what the text says and what it means. The meaning does not change just because you have a new temptation, your child has rebelled, or you lost your job in the downsizing craze. First get the meaning of the passage. How it applies to you will change as you do. But we are not

For more on this theme see "What It Means to Me" by Walt Russell, in Discover the Word, chapter 8, pages 83-90. You may wish to assign this chapter to a student ahead of time and let him or her bring a report as part of your presentation.

free to make the Bible say whatever we need to hear. Though our felt needs are urgent—and the Bible does often speak to them—the Bible does not exist primarily to help you feel better, reduce stress, find joy, peace, or self-actualization. The Bible is the revelation of God in Christ and the Gospel Jesus came to demonstrate. To reduce Bible study to self-motivation, mental hygiene, or to psychological “upcheering” is to trivialize both the Bible and the spiritual life.

Methods of Formative Bible Study

Select one of the three Bible study exercises in this activity and prepare to lead your students through it in a thorough manner.

Chapter 12 of Reflecting God, "Nurtured by the Light of the Word," develops this method of study. You may want to assign a person or small group to examine that chapter and share it in more detail with the class. Or you may ask them ahead of time to use the Explorer's Method in the (already assigned) study of Ephesians 2:1-10 and share the experience with the class.

Refer students to Resource 10-5.

Explorer's Method

Step 1. Observation: Notice every word. Use the shifting emphasis method. Notice what happens as you emphasize different words as you read it aloud.

Step 2. Interpretation: What does the Bible text mean? What does the context contribute to the meaning? Step into the shoes of the Bible characters in the text and view the issues from their point of view.

Step 3. Correlation: What have others said about this text? Compare what you have gotten out of the passage with the interpretation of others. Check your study Bible or a concordance to see what other Bible passages speak to this same issue. Check a reputable Bible commentary.

Step 4. Evaluation: Ask questions like these: “What part of this passage is particularly valuable to me right now? Why am I glad I read this passage today?”

Step 5. Application: “Lord, what do You want me to do with what I have read?”

Ask the Text Questions

Refer students to Resource 10-6.

An old and simple favorite is to simply ask questions of the passage you are studying. Here are some often-used ones.

1. What does this passage tell me about God?
2. What does this passage tell me about Jesus Christ?
3. What does this passage tell me about the Holy Spirit?
4. Is there a sin to avoid?
5. Is there a command to be obeyed?
6. Is there a prayer to make my own?
7. Is there a promise to claim?
8. What does this passage teach me about myself?
9. What does the passage say about Christian service?
10. Is there something here I should memorize?
11. Is there something here I should share?
12. Is there an example to follow or avoid?

Stepping into the Scene

Refer students to Resource 10-7.

The “Step into the Scene” methodology is very old. It got into the Wesleyan heritage through Richard Baxter and his 17th-century book *The Saint’s Everlasting Rest*. John Wesley reprinted this book in the 18th century. This is not some New Age concept—it has been in our tradition for a long time.

The Reflecting God Workbook, pages 70-72, presents a *Step into the Scene* exercise based on Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians. Use it as a reference, or as a homework assignment, or you may want to lead your class through that exercise instead of, or in addition to, the Luke 12 exercise at right.

Read Luke 12:13-21.

Get the Scene in Mind.

It’s early in the day. Jesus has called His disciples together for a staff meeting. It is going to be a long day. Already Jesus’ fame has spread, and a huge crowd is spreading out before them in a valley. But before the preaching, teaching, and miracles are to begin, Jesus called the staff meeting. They are on the crest of the hill partially hidden by cedars and boulders. It is still cool where the shaded staff meeting is taking place. Jesus is lecturing His dozen disciples about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (vv. 12:1-2), comforting them with God’s providence (vv. 12:4-7), and about faithful witnessing for Christ (vv. 12:8-12).

A self-absorbed joker who demands that Jesus settle a financial fight then interrupts this staff meeting. By the time Jesus gets around to answering, the crowd has surged forward. The staff meeting is over for now and Jesus addresses the throng. Read verses 13-21 again in light of this scene setting.

Working Individually Respond to These Items.

1. Imagine the Bible scene before you.
2. What is the temperature, the weather, and the time of day? What sounds do you hear? What scenery? What smells are present? What animals are there?
3. Step into the scene yourself. Who is standing on your left? Your right?
4. How is the person next to you dressed? How is Jesus dressed? The disciples?
5. Listen to the dialogue, the parable, catch every word. Don't miss anything.
6. Notice the characters in the story:

The Multitude	The Disciples
The Questioner	The Rich Fool
Jesus	God
7. With what character did you identify most? Which did you resist most?
8. What did you perceive Jesus' mood and attitude to be?
9. Did you get any new insights into the meaning of this Bible passage? Jot down your feelings, insights, and ideas.

Step Out of the Scene and Write a Letter.

You can always step back into it. But step out of the scene and think it over. Then write a letter (or e-mail message) to one of the characters. Tell him whatever is on your heart. Write only three or four paragraphs. Use a separate sheet of paper. If you are willing, be prepared to share your letter with the group.

Here is a letter one student wrote to the man who interrupted Jesus with a financial problem. He called the guy "Harvey."

Dear Harvey:

Count on you to mess up. Did you ever miss the point? You have not one clue as to what the gospel is about, not an inkling of what the Carpenter has been teaching all along—that it's better to make a life than to make a living.

He showed you how trivial your "problem" really was. As kind and tender as Jesus is, He wouldn't give your problem the time of day. Now if you had been confessing your sins you would have had His undivided attention, but no, you wanted to grab an inheritance. Talk about selfish.

Read this letter to the class as a primer, or as a way to bring this exercise to a close.

And speaking of sins, I imagine that you have plenty of them. You strike me as the sort of guy who runs a pawnshop and charges widows and homeless folks 200 percent interest, right? Read the *Wall Street Journal* more than the Bible, right?

You did achieve one thing. You became famous. Centuries of Christians now know you as the dunce who interrupted Jesus with a question so selfish that it provoked the parable of the rich fool. Could you see yourself in that parable? Probably not, but I sure did. I saw you, and you looked a lot like me.

Sincerely yours,

Ask students if they gained any formative insights from this exercise.

Sharing the Mail

Would any of you care to share the letter that you wrote?

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Allow students to respond.

Define:

informational reading
transformational reading
formative reading

Looking Ahead

Bible reading and prayer go together like bread and butter. Next lesson we study the art and practice of Christian prayer.

Assign Homework

Refer students to the Student Guide.

Bible Study Plan

Devise a two-week plan for your daily personal Bible study. Cite the books or passages to be studied. Be sure that the plan includes:

- informational, transformational, and formative elements—label the three elements
- the tools, aids, and methods that you will use

Journal Prompt

In your journaling time record your reflections on the three most significant times of Bible study that you have experienced in the past year. Be specific. State the passage, the setting, others who may have shared the experience, and how your life and/or ministry have changed because of those experiences.

Punctuate the Finish

Alternate closer: When world-renowned theologian Karl Barth, the father of neoorthodoxy, made his last visit to America, a Chicago reporter asked him publicly, "Dr. Barth, what is the most important truth you have discovered in a lifetime of study?" Barth replied, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." Discover the Word, 113.

Adapted from Discover the Word, Everett Leedingham, ed. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1997), 121.

Newspaper Ad: "Wanted, young, skinny, wiry fellows over 18. Must be expert riders. Willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred. Wages \$25 per week."

In early 1860, this classified ad appeared in the San Francisco and Sacramento newspapers. The Russell, Majors and Waddell Transportation Company was looking for 80 young men to become riders for the new mail service, the Pony Express.

Each rider carried some 20 pounds of mail, costing \$5 an ounce. The rider was also given a Bible. The Pony Express rider's oath included the promise to read and live by the Holy Bible—even in the Wild West.

Lesson 11

Prayer: Adoration, Praise, and Thanksgiving

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	The Bible as the Textbook on Prayer	Small-Group Bible Study	Bibles Resource 11-1
0:35	The Prayer of Adoration and Praise	Lecture	Resource 11-2 Resource 11-3 Resource 11-4
1:05	The Prayer of Thanksgiving	Instruction/Response	Resource 11-5 Resource 11-6
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide Hymnbook

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

E. Dee Freeborn, et al., *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 81-94.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), 111-18.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 76-82.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*, 30-32.

Morris Weigelt and E. Dee Freeborn, *The Lord's Prayer: Design for Spiritual Formation* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001).

William Willimon and Stanley Hauerwas, *Lord, Teach Us: The Lord's Prayer and the Christian Life* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996).

Learner Objectives

To help students

- discover the Bible as a textbook on prayer, especially the prayers of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving
- appreciate the significance of adoration and thanksgiving that is often neglected in personal Christian prayer
- develop a growing vocabulary of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving and incorporate it into their personal devotional life

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Two-week plan for personal Bible study
Journaling

Assign for next lesson

Student's Choice

You have a choice among four options. Choose one of the following assignments to complete and hand in at the beginning of the next session.

Artwork: Refine the art of the Woman with the Torch and the Pitcher begun in class today. Make it the very best that you can do. If you have no talent for art, select one of the other options.

Draw, sculpt, or paint the 12th-century woman made famous by the disciples of Bernard of Clairvaux. She has the pitcher of water to quench the fires of hell and the flaming torch to burn up the pleasures of heaven so that believers can appreciate God for His own sake and not for the hope of pleasure or the escape of pain.

Will your art depict her on a horse, hillside, a cloud, a street? How is she dressed? What color is her hair, her skin, her clothing? What expression does she have on her face, in her eyes—holy awe, holy anger, the plea of a teacher or parent?

A prayer-life survey, administered and tabulated: Do a “prayer-life” survey of at least 12 persons. Do not report the names, but descriptions of the person would be helpful, i.e., 19-year-old college sophomore, experienced pastor, middle-aged businessman, etc. Tabulate the results in an organized manner and report trends and discoveries. Ask at least 10 questions. You could use questions like these:

1. In a word, how would you describe your prayer life?
2. What book or sermon on prayer has helped you most?
3. What examples of prayer in the Bible come to mind?
4. When you pray what place do praise and thanksgiving have in the prayers you offer?
5. What plan or method of prayer (if any) do you use?

A song of praise and prayer: Study Psalm 108: 1-5 and write the lyrics to a song of praise. Use a familiar tune if you wish. Hand in your work. Be prepared to teach the song to the class. Use guitar, piano, or recorded accompaniment.

Young adult lesson plan:

1. Study the Song of Mary, Luke 1:46-55. Plan a lesson on prayer based on this prayer of praise.
2. Set your objectives by asking and answering these three questions: What do I want my students to KNOW? What do I want them to FEEL? What do I want them to DO?
3. Devise two or three learning activities that will help you reach your objectives.

Journal Prompt

You have selected one of the assignments above to complete and hand in. Select another one to write about in your journal. You do not have to do the whole assignment, just reflect on it in your journal.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Have students get into groups of three to share their Bible study plan.

Return and collect homework.

Motivator

Nil tanti

How important is prayer, anyway?

Joseph Benson was a bright young man, a younger contemporary of John Wesley, who became one of the first systematic theologians and Bible commentary writers among the early Wesleyans. John Wesley wrote to him on November 30, 1770. Benson was such a good scholar that Wesley wrote part of the letter in Greek, part in Latin, and part of it in English.

Wesley closed the letter with these words: “Let no study swallow up or intrude upon the hours of private prayer. *Nil tanti* [nothing is of so much importance].”

Ann Bolton was a woman whom John Wesley led to sanctifying grace and to remarkable Christian service—mostly by mail, writing her some 130 letters of spiritual guidance over a period of 29 years. Ann was a tireless worker organizing prayer meetings, small-group ministries, and charities for the poor and the sick. In a letter dated August 25, 1771, Wesley advised Ann, “Let not your works of mercy rob you of time for private prayer.”

No advice could be more important to the Christian minister today. With the demands of counseling, sermonizing, administration, soul winning, and sick visitation pounding at his or her door constantly, time is at a premium. As the minister cuts corners to make time for the needs of others, he or she can borrow time from only three sources: the time for sleep and rest, the time that should go to family, and the most easily invaded time of all the “hours of private prayer.”

Spending oneself for others is no excuse for missing private prayer. *Nil tanti!*

Orientation

This lesson is the first of two on prayer. Since this unit is about the personal disciplines and devotional skills and practices, we deal primarily with private prayer. Corporate prayer will come up for more attention in the unit on the community disciplines. In today's lesson we look at the Bible as our textbook on prayer, giving special attention to the prayers of adoration or praise and prayers of thanksgiving.

Learner Objectives

Direct students to the Student Guide.

To help students

- discover the Bible as a textbook on prayer, especially the prayers of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving
- appreciate the significance of adoration and thanksgiving that is often neglected in personal Christian prayer
- develop a growing vocabulary of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving and incorporate it into their personal devotional life

Lesson Body

Small Groups: The Bible as the Textbook on Prayer

(25 minutes)

As the learning leader work through all four of these biblical prayers so that you can enrich, encourage, and prompt the students in their in-class Bible study.

Refer students to Resource 11-1.

The Bible gives us examples of prayers, model prayers, prayers that we can make our own. Before we plunge into the many books on prayer that come off the press every day, we should become acquainted with what the Bible teaches us about prayer.

The Elements and Sequence of Prayer

1. Adoration or praise (for who God is)
2. Thanksgiving and praise (for what God does)
3. Confession (of sin or need)
4. Repentance (turning from sin or disobedience to God)
5. Affirmation of trust, faith, hope
6. Intercession (praying for others)
7. Petition (asking God for help or guidance)

Biblical Prayers

If your class is large enough, use Base Groups with each group studying one or two of the four assignments. If your class is smaller, use study pairs. After the small groups have worked for 10 minutes, have each group join another group and share their discoveries.

Study the following, marking and noting the elements and sequences of prayer listed above:

- The Lord's Prayer: Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV) and Luke 11:1-4
- A Prayer Psalm: Psalm 90. Compare to the hymn "O God Our Help in Ages Past" (*Sing to the Lord, 95*)
- A Nation's Prayer: Lamentations 5
- St. Paul at Prayer: Three times in 1 Thessalonians, Paul pauses for a short prayer for the believers. (1:2-3; 3:11-13; 5:23-24)

*A good way to close this activity and transition into the next is to sing together "O God Our Help in Ages Past" (*Sing to the Lord, 95*).*

Activities: The Prayer of Adoration and Praise

(30 minutes)

You can Jigsaw these activities, assigning one group to Resource 11-2, another to Resource 11-3 and a third to Resource 11-4. This would be an excellent use of time.

Prayer, Punishment, and Pleasure

Take away the bliss of heaven and the punishment for sin and where is the motivation for prayer, praise, and adoration for God. No heaven, no hell—why pray?

That sort of shallow thinking by Christians motivated the 12th-century disciples of Bernard of Clairvaux to make popular the vision of a woman carrying a pitcher of water in one hand and a torch in the other. All over France they carried drawings and preached sermons that said with the pitcher of water the woman would put out the fires of hell. With the torch she would burn up the pleasures of heaven. With the punishment of hell and the glories of heaven not scaring people or coaxing people into righteous living and self-serving prayers, people would be able to simply love God for His own sake and offer prayers of adoration and praise that had no vested self-interest.

From Reflecting God, 114.

That image may be extreme, but as Wesley Tracy writes in *Reflecting God*, “In adoration one worships God, not for what He has done for you, but for His own sake. That is to say, adoration does not spring from the heart because God has forgiven sins, removed guilt, brought peace of mind, . . . or sent the rent money—though He may have bestowed all of these. Rather, adoration rises in love for the God who was before we were born, what He is and will be long after we are gone.”

From A Room Called Remember (Harper & Row, 1984), 78.

Frederick Buechner said, “I loved him [God] not so much in spite of there being nothing in it for me, but almost because there was nothing in it for me.”

Refer students to Resource 11-2.

Have you experienced this kind of prayer?

You are to express the idea of the Woman with the Torch and the Pitcher by making a drawing or sketch of the scene.

Let some of the class members display and explain their artwork.

Praying a Psalm of Praise: Psalm 104

Refer students to Resource 11-3.

Try to help the students experience the psalm as prayer.

Point out that adoration and praise cannot always be simply separated.

Use a reader's theater approach, alternating readers with each paragraph as marked at right. Go through the psalm at least twice. If practical, let them prepare this reading for the Sunday morning worship service. PowerPoint or other visuals of the glory of God in creation could enhance the presentation.

We will use four readers to lead us in the prayer of praise.

Verses 1-4, Majestic Creator
Verses 5-9, Foundations of the earth
Verses 10-13, Springs of water
Verses 14-18, Fertility of creation
Verses 19-23, Day and night
Verses 24-26, The mighty sea and its creatures
Verses 27-30, God, Sustainer of life
Verses 31-35, Let my soul praise Him

Building Your Adoration Vocabulary

In *The Upward Call*, E. Dee Freeborn, beloved teacher of spiritual formation at Nazarene Theological Seminary, wrote that he discovered that his adoration vocabulary was "meager indeed. A friend helped me by suggesting that I use the alphabet. Following his advice I made a list of 'adoration descriptor,' writing one word for every letter of the alphabet. Then I prayed the whole list. What a breakthrough!"

From *The Upward Call*, 84.

Freeborn said that he began to record his new adoration vocabulary in his prayer journal, going back and adding new words or descriptive phrases as they came to mind.

Refer students to Resource 11-4.

If time permits, let students complete the list of adoration descriptors in class. Or you can make it one of the homework options.

Ready to start your own list? Here's a prompt for the first three and the last

A—Almighty
B—Blessed
C—Creator
Z—Zenith of Glory

Guided Discussion: The Prayer of Thanksgiving

(15 minutes)

A Biblical Prayer of Thanksgiving and Praise

Refer students to Resource 11-5.

Examine the Virgin Mary's prayer of praise and thanksgiving in Luke 1:46-55.

My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and his descendants forever.

Luke 1:46-55, NRSV

Other examples of prayers of thanksgiving include Psalm 105, thanks to the God of history, and Psalm 107, thanks to the delivering God.

List the things God has done for which Mary offers thanks. List the words and phrases of praise for who God is.

Jesus and the Thanksgiving Prayer

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess 5:16-18, NIV).

“Give thanks in all circumstances” is not only the will of Jesus Christ; it is the model that he lived out before us. Faced with a hungry throng in the desert and with only one sack lunch with which to feed them, Jesus did not get desperate and wail out “O God, if You hear me, I sure need a miracle now. I think . . . I really believe You can do it!” No, Jesus simply took the loaves and fishes, returned thanks, that is, said a table grace, and passed out the food (Mt 14:13-21).

When Jesus stood at the grave of His good friend Lazarus He gave thanks. He did not ask everyone to join hands and hum “I Would Not Be Denied.” Instead, He simply prayed, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me . . .” (Jn 11:41)

“Give thanks in all circumstances,” the Bible says. How about Jesus at the Last Supper. His heart was broken by the betrayal that He knew lay just ahead. His death, too, loomed just hours away. Give thanks in those circumstances? But that is exactly what Jesus did. He took a piece of bread, called it the symbol of His

broken body, took the cup and called the wine the symbol of His own blood of the covenant, and before distributing the bread and wine, what did He do? Jesus “gave thanks” (Lk 22: 17-19). Mark 14:26 tells us that Jesus went to His death singing a hymn. We do not know the words, but who would be surprised if the hymn He sang on His way to the Cross was a hymn of thanksgiving?

So there you have it. All four of Jesus’ biographers—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—struck with the fact that “in all circumstances” Jesus gave thanks.

Refer students to Resource 11-6.

For what three things that God has done do you wish to thank Him today?

For what three things do you wish to praise God for being rather than doing?

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review and Homework

As you explain the various homework assignments you will be reviewing today's lesson.

Direct students to the Student Guide.

Student's Choice

Choose one of the following assignments to complete and hand it at the beginning of class next lesson.

Artwork: Refine the art begun in class today. Make it the very best that you can do. If you have no talent in art, select one of the other options.

Draw, sculpt, or paint the 12th-century woman made famous by the disciples of Bernard of Clairvaux. She has the pitcher of water to quench the fires of hell and the flaming torch to burn up the pleasures of heaven so that believers can appreciate God for His own sake and not for the hope of pleasure or the escape of pain.

Will your art depict her on a horse, a hillside, a cloud, a busy street? How is she dressed? What color is her hair, her skin, her clothing? What expression does she have on her face, in her eyes, holy awe, holy anger, the plea of a teacher or parent?

Do a prayer-life survey of at least 12 persons. Do not report names, but descriptions of the person would be useful, i.e., 19-year-old-college sophomore, experienced pastor, middle-aged businessman, etc. Tabulate the results in an organized manner and report trends and discoveries. Ask at least 10 questions. You could use questions like these:

1. In a word, how would you describe your prayer life?
2. What book or sermon on prayer has helped you most?
3. What examples of prayer in the Bible come to mind?
4. When you pray what place do praise and thanksgiving have in the prayers you offer?
5. What plan or method of prayer (if any) do you use?

Write a song of praise and prayer. Study Psalm 108:1-5 and write the lyrics to a song of praise. Use a familiar tune if you wish. Hand in your work. Be prepared to teach the song to the class. Use guitar, piano, or recorded accompaniment.

Young adult lesson plan

1. Study the Song of Mary, Luke 1:46-55. Plan a lesson on prayer based on this prayer of praise.
2. Set your objectives by asking and answering these three questions: What do I want my students to KNOW? What do I want them to FEEL? What do I want them to DO?
3. Devise two or three learning activities that will help you reach your objectives.

Journal Prompts

You have selected one of the assignments above to complete and hand in. Select another one of the above assignments to write about in your journal. You do not have to do the whole assignment, just reflect on it in your journaling time. Suppose that you have no art talent, so you do not choose assignment 1 about the lady with the fire and water. Nevertheless, you may want to journal your response to the questions about her appearance and on the significance of the concept for your own spiritual life.

Looking Ahead

Next time we study the prayers of confession, intercession, and petition.

Punctuate the Finish

From Worship in Song, 17.

Music and prayer often go together. Let us close by singing Henry Van Dyke's classic hymn of adoration and thanksgiving, "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee."

Lesson 12

Prayer: Confession, Intercession, and Petition

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Prayer of Confession	Lecture	Resource 12-1
0:20	Prayer of Confession	Discussion	Resource 12-2
0:35	Prayer of Intercession	Bible Study	Resource 12-3 Resource 12-4 Resource 12-5 Resource 12-6
1:00	Prayer of Petition	Small Groups	Resource 12-7 Resource 12-8
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible, Letters of John and Jude* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 114-16.

Richard J. Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1992), 25-33, 177-201.

E. Dee Freeborn, et al., *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 81-93.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), 111-18.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 76-82.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*, 30-32.

Morris Weigelt and E. Dee Freeborn, *The Lord's Prayer: Design for Spiritual Formation* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001).

Learner Objectives

To help students

- define and explain prayers of confession, intercession, and petition and state their significance for the holy life
- own the need to offer prayers of confession, intercession, and petition
- examine their own prayer life and build the habit of offering prayers of confession, intercession, and petition

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Choice of assignments

Journaling

To be assigned for next lesson

Journal Prompts

- In your journal write a prayer of confession that could be used in a worship service. Be sure to word it to take in all three dimensions of confession used in today's lesson.
- Use one of the four methods of intercessory prayer explored in today's lesson. After putting it into practice for several days, reflect on it in your journal.
- Write a dialogue with the apostle John about his "conditions of prayer" that were studied in this lesson.

Harvesting Our Journals

Bring to class the spiritual life journal that you have been writing in since the first day of this course. The learning leader will check to see that you have the journal with you. The learning leader will not read your spiritual life journal in detail but will simply look to see what kind of regular entries are made and in what ways your journal is organized.

No one will be pressured to share anything from the journal that he or she wishes to keep private, but we will harvest the best of the journaling experience as we share in small groups.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Ask three or four students to share their homework with the class.

Return and collect homework.

Motivator

A shorter and more eloquent statement on these themes can be found on page 256 of Richard Foster's *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*.

A life of prayer takes us *inward* to the transformation we need. Prayer does change us. If we are not prepared to change and be changed, we will drop prayer like a hot fondue fork. And we will make prayer a meaningless "form of godliness" or something we just do not have time for.

A life of prayer moves us upward into the *intimacy* and *friendship* with God that we long for. As we linger daily with God in adoration, rest in Him, and listen to Him, we move from thinking and feeling that God is a part of our lives to the realization that we are a small part of His life.

A life of prayer moves us *outward* into the *ministry* and *service* we need. Interceding takes our minds off ourselves as we make of our hearts an arena in which God and the prayed-for one can meet.

A life of prayer develops the *practice of faith* that we need as we learn that God is to be trusted. After Calvary, God has a right to be trusted. And that includes all the requests and petitions that you and I bring so anxiously to Him.

Orientation

Having studied the prayers of adoration, praise, and thanksgiving in our most recent lesson, we now turn to the prayers of confession, intercession, and petition. We will start with the Lord's Prayer and move to our own experiences in prayer.

Learner Objectives

Direct students to the Student Guide.

To help students

- define and explain prayers of confession, intercession, and petition and state their significance for the holy life
- own the need to pray prayers of confession, intercession, and petition
- examine your own prayer life and build the habit of offering prayers of confession, intercession, and petition

Lesson Body

Lecture: The Prayer of Confession

(10 minutes)

“Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us” (Lk 11:4).

Refer students to Resource 12-1.

All of us need to practice the prayer of confession. After our prayer of praise and thanksgiving our prayerful attention should move to confession. Today we will look at three types of confession.

Confession of Sin

Unconfessed sin strangles the spiritual life. When we find sin on our hands the only appropriate thing to do is honestly confess it to God. Indeed, we know that “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn 1:9, KJV).

The worst thing to do would be to ignore or deny our sin or to call it something less than what it really is. If we find sin on our hands and “say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves” (1 Jn 1:8, KJV). Honesty in confession is such a truth that when Mark Twain put these words into the mouth of Huck Finn readers then and now knew exactly what he meant: “You can’t pray a lie—I found that out.”

The New Testament word for “confess” is made from two Greek words. One means “same” or “alike” or “in agreement.” The other word means “word” or “speak.” Therefore, “confession” means to “speak alike” or “speak the same.” The idea is that to confess our sins we say the same thing that God does. We speak out our agreement with God about our sins.

As we open the depths of ourselves to the Spirit who searches hearts, He may point out sins that cry out for redemption and forgiveness. Confession is that important first step to full reconciliation with God.

It is true that saved and sanctified men and women do not have to sin, but sometimes they do. And when they do, honest confession must occur or the spiritual life starts running out of oxygen.

Nothing takes the place of confession. Not busy hours of service to the needy, not long prayers for “world peace,” not signing up for a dozen church committees, not giving a month’s salary to missions. What is required is “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

From Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home, 27.

Note that God the Spirit goes with us as we examine our hearts. This is important, points out Richard Foster, for two reasons. First, “if we are the lone examiners of our heart, a thousand justifications will arise to declare our innocence.” At the other end of the spectrum is “our tendency for self-flagellation. If left to our own devices, it is so easy to take one good look at who we truly are and declare ourselves unredeemable. Our damaged self-image votes against us and we begin beating ourselves mercilessly.”

Confession of the Need for Sanctifying Grace

Centuries of Christian experience tell us that even though a believer has been born again and has forsaken the life of sin, an inner bent toward sin still remains. Though the believer is done with deliberate acts of sin, an inward principle of sin still resists God’s will.

From Discipline and Discovery, (Nashville: Disciplined Order of Christ, 1961), 89.

The Wesleyan tradition teaches that God can cleanse the heart and fill it with divine love until sanctification is a reality. The believer does come to love God with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength, and the neighbor as oneself. This is the gift of sanctifying grace. The renowned spiritual writer and teacher Albert E. Day wrote: “On this I will venture my eternal salvation—if you will make the purity of God your indefatigable quest, the God of purity will give himself to you in such fullness, that your questions will be transcended in the splendor of the experience that has overtaken you.”

But before the splendor of that experience overtakes the Christian pilgrim, sin remains within—though it does not rule. Still the believer on the road to full sanctification can appropriately confess his or her need for inner cleansing, for the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Confession in the Prayers of the Sanctified

From “The Repentance of Believers,” Sermons on Several Occasions, (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Book Room, n.d.), 185.

John Wesley taught that the most holy among us, “the most perfect . . . need the blood of the atonement, and may properly say, ‘Forgive us our trespasses.’”

From The Upward Call, 87.

The point is that “the most holy among us” are members of a fallen race and the fountain of a thousand infirmities. We can’t change that, but it shoves us toward falling short of God’s holiness, God’s perfect will again and again. “Our judgment is flawed, our reason inadequate, our knowledge deficient, and our performance of duty sometimes erratic—even though our intention is to do only the right.”

From The Upward Call, 87.

An often neglected teaching of Wesleyanism is that these shortcomings, infirmities, faults, and failures that dog us because of our fallenness, while not properly called sins, still need the atoning blood of Christ to make us acceptable to God. Therefore, the most holy among us must confess the need for grace to cover our mistakes and failures.

From “Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, Discourse III,” Sermons on Several Occasions, 32.

Closely related to this matter is that we must regularly confess our need for the ongoing cleansing by the Holy Spirit. Holiness is dynamic, not static. When we receive the baptism of the Spirit, that is, the experience of sanctifying grace, God does not give us a lifetime supply of holiness that we can store away like a bag of flour. The cleansing and filling of the Spirit is not once and for all. Rather, we are kept holy by the moment-by-moment, ongoing cleansing of the blood of the Savior. John Wesley preached, “We need the power of Christ every moment . . . to continue in the spiritual life and without which, notwithstanding our present holiness, we should be devils the next moment.”

Thus, confession is important for the deeper life Christian too. He or she should confess the need for atoning grace for the faults and failures endemic to our fallen human state as well as the need for ongoing, moment-by-moment cleansing by the Holy Spirit.

Guided Discussion: The Prayer of Confession

(15 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 12-2.

St. Augustine wrote, “Before God can deliver us we must undeceive ourselves.” In that spirit, consider the following list of hazards to confession. The fact is we need grace even to pray the prayer of confession properly. Some of our motives are muddled or invisible to us even as we pray. But by God’s grace we ask Him to guide our confession away from the hazards and by-streets that distract us. Think about each item on this list. Try to clarify, and amplify each one “In Other Words” as you explain it to the class or your discussion group.

1. You may ask for forgiveness without offering forgiveness.
2. You may bewail the sins of humanity, but not your own.
3. You can call your sin by a lesser name, like mistake or human frailty, tough love, or handing out justice.
4. You can come up with a thousand justifications for your sins.
5. You can look at your sorry record and declare that you are unredeemable.
6. You can deny that you have sinned.
7. You can daily morbidly focus on yourself rather than God or others who need prayer.
8. You can confess your sin and depravity with no hatred for it and with no intention or will to forsake it.
9. You can keep on confessing humiliating sins for which God has long ago forgiven you, praying as if you questioned His forgiveness.
10. You can confess a sin, but fail to make the restitution that God requires.

Bible Study: The Prayer of Intercession—Praying for Others

(25 minutes)

“Father, . . . your kingdom come” (Lk 11:2), “Always keep on praying for all the saints” (Eph 6:18).

Embrace the Word

Refer students to Resource 12-3.

Lead the class in a Bible study.

Since the class has recently studied several methods of Bible study (Lesson 10) you may want to let the class or the study groups choose the method they want to use.

Lesson 1: John 16:5-7. Phrases to note: “I am going to him who sent me. . . . It is for your good that I am going away.” Jesus is returning to the Father in heaven and that is good for His disciples. Verse 7 gives one reason it is good for them that Jesus is going away. That is so the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, can come. But there is another reason that it is good. What do you think it is? Lesson 2 may give you the answer.

Lesson 2: Romans 8:34. “Christ Jesus, who died . . . is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”

By going away, Jesus is “entering his eternal work as Intercessor before the throne of God, and, as a result, we are able to pray for others with an entirely new authority.”

Donald Bloesch affirms, “To pray in the name of Christ means to pray in the awareness, that our prayers have no worthiness or efficacy apart from His atoning

*See Foster, Prayer, 192.
See also 1 Timothy 2:5.*

From The Struggle of Prayer, quoted by Foster, 193.

sacrifice and redemptive mediation. . . . Our prayers cannot penetrate the tribunal of God unless they are presented to the Father by the Son.”

Lesson 3: Romans 8:26-27. Who is interceding for whom in this passage?

Engage the Teachings

Refer students to Resource 12-4.

Following are some insightful teachings on intercession. Consider each one. Which ideas are new to you? Which has the most impact on your prayer life now?

Teaching 1: Intercession is a priestly ministry. It is part of the priesthood of all believers because believers should be priests in prayer in behalf of one another.

From “The Genesee Diary,” quoted in Reflecting God, 115.

Teaching 2: Henri J. Nouwen taught that in intercession “my heart can become the place where God can hear the prayer for my neighbors and embrace them with his love.” That is, the center of my heart can become the place where God and the person I am praying for can meet. There, in my heart, God can “embrace them with his love.”

Have you ever thought of your heart in this way? Try it now. Prepare a place in your heart where God and someone in need can meet.

From Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home, 216 and 223.

Teaching 3: Richard Foster says that in the intercessory prayer of suffering we “voluntarily take unto ourselves the griefs and sorrows of others in order to set them free.” We cannot carry forever all the sorrows of others. Rather, when the time comes “we release them into the arms of the Father. . . . Our task . . . is a small one: to hold the agony of others just long enough for them to let go of it themselves.”

Take time now to imagine holding in your own heart the agony of a particular person who is suffering from a terminal disease, a broken marriage, a crushing depression, a chaining addiction, a total loss of self-esteem.

From The Cost of Discipleship, 166, quoted in The Reflecting God Workbook, 79.

Teaching 4: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a World War II martyr, taught his people to intercede by repenting for unsaved persons. “We are taking their . . . guilt and perdition upon ourselves and pleading to God for them. We are doing vicariously what they cannot [or will not] do for themselves.”

Repenting for another, Richard Foster believes, makes it somehow easier and more likely that person will turn to Christ.

Refer students to Resource 12-5.

Think about the power of intercession to create a place for God and others to meet, the ministry of holding the agony of another in one's heart, and the power of repenting prayer to help others find the Lord.

Allow students to respond.

Which of the following most nearly matches your own response to these teachings?

1. Lord, forgive me for not praying more for others.
2. I didn't know I could do so much to help.
3. God would never listen to me.
4. Intercession sounds heavy and depressing.
5. I will plan to pray for others every day—starting today.
6. I wish someone would pray for me like that.

Adapted from the *Reflecting God Workbook*, 79.

Encounter the Insights and Practices

Divide your class in study groups or their Base Groups and let each group explore one of these four methods of intercessory prayer.

Call for each group to report to the whole class on the experience.

Refer students to Resource 12-6.

Though nothing takes the place of private, agonizing intercession, these methods can help students get a good start with intercessory prayer, and help them make it a habit.

From *The Upward Call*, 91.

E. Dee Freeborn, in *The Upward Call*, shares a method of intercession for family members. He says the birthdays in his family come on the 2nd, 21st, and 30th days of the month. Therefore, he prays especially for his wife and two children every month on those days. As far as prayer support goes, it gives them 12 birthdays a year. "To remember, I switch a ring or watch to another hand or arm. Every time I notice the 'out of place' ring or watch during the day I breathe a prayer for that family member."

This method would work for Base Group members, prayer groups, and close friends as well as family members. Try it.

Praying the 23rd Psalm for Others

Insert the name of someone you are praying for into the blanks where personal pronouns appear in the text of the Today's English Version of the 23rd psalm.

The Lord is _____'s shepherd;
_____ has everything he/she
needs. He leads _____ in fields
of green grass and leads _____
to quiet pools of fresh water. He gives

_____ new strength.
He guides _____ in the right
paths, as he has promised. Even if he/she goes
through deepest darkness, _____
will not be afraid, Lord, because you are with him/her.

Your shepherd's rod and staff protect
_____. You prepare a banquet
for _____ where all his/her
enemies can see _____;

You welcome _____ as an
honored guest and fill _____'s
cup to the brim.

I know that your goodness and love will be with
_____ all
_____ 's life; and your house will
be _____ 's home as long as
he/she lives. Amen.

Praying the Lord's Prayer for Others

Insert the name of the person for which you are
praying into the blanks.

_____ 's Father who art in
heaven,
Hallowed be thy name in _____.
Thy kingdom come in _____.
Thy will be done in _____ on
earth just as if she/he were with you in heaven.
Give _____ this day her/his daily
bread, and forgive _____ her/
his trespasses as she/he forgives those who trespass
against her/him.
Lead not _____ into temptation,
but deliver her/him from the evil one.
Let _____ 's joy be your
kingdom, your power, and your glory forever. Amen.

Five-Fingered Prayer

This method is especially helpful for families with
children who are learning to pray. Several versions of
this exercise are in print. This one is adapted from the
Reflecting God Leader's Guide, 31.

1. The Little Finger—this is the smallest and weakest
finger. Pray for someone who is weak and feeling
vulnerable right now.
2. The Second Finger—this finger is seldom used
alone. Still it is an important part of the team. Pray
for someone who quietly works behind the scenes

- without fanfare or acclaim.
3. The Middle Finger—this is the tallest on the hand. Pray for someone in high office with heavy responsibilities.
 4. The Index Finger—this is the hardest working of all the fingers. Pray for someone who works very hard.
 5. The Thumb—the thumb is the closest to you. Pray for someone you love very much.

Small Groups: The Prayer of Petition

(20 minutes)

“Give us today our daily bread . . . deliver us from the evil one” (Mt 6: 11, 13).

Encounter the Concepts

Petition—asking God for gifts, strength, and grace—is important. In the sequence of prayer it comes after adoration, thanksgiving, confession, and intercession, but it is still a vital part of prayer.

Refer students to Resource 12-7.

Assign students or study teams to enlarge, clarify, and apply these concepts about the prayer of petition. If the “In Other Words” exercise used earlier worked well for your class, try it here as well.

Concept 1: Richard Foster writes, “Petition . . . is not a lower form of prayer. It is our staple diet. In a childlike expression of faith we bring our daily needs and desires to our heavenly Father. . . . It is a false humility to stand back and not share our deepest needs. His [God’s] heart is wounded by our reticence (*Prayer*, 178-79).

Concept 2: Jesus never outgrew His need for the prayer of petition. That’s a strong sign that you and I won’t either.

Concept 3: Ways in which God answers our petitions:

- Yes, I thought you would never ask.
- Yes, and here’s more.
- Not yet.
- No, I love you too much.
- No, but My grace is sufficient.

Concept 4: “A day without prayer is a boast against God” (Owen Carr).

Concept 5: “God is always listening, more ready to hear than we are to pray” (William Barclay).

Concept 6: “Thy kingdom come (Luke 11:2, KJV) is a petition not for what we want, but for what God wants. We are so apt to think that prayer is asking God for what we want, whereas true prayer is asking God for what he wants” (William Barclay, “The Letters of John and Jude,” in *The Daily Study Bible Series*, 116).

Concept 7: Jesus teaches us to pray, “Thy will be done” not “Thy will be changed.”

Embrace the Word: Bible Study

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him” (1 John 5:14-15).

Lead your class in an exploration of 1 John 5:14-15; John 14:13-14; John 15:7; and 1 John 3:21-23.

Use as a teacher's resource: William. Barclay, Daily Study Bible, Letters of John and Jude, 114-16.

Refer students to Resource 12-8.

St. John promises a lot. Several times in his writings he says that we will receive what we ask for in prayer. Does that mean that I can pray down the winning lottery numbers, a promotion to vice president, or a position on the Olympic team? No, John's promises show that we must pray in accordance with God's will. Three times John records what might be called the conditions of answered prayer. Check out John's conditions for answered prayer:

Obedience—We receive because we obey His commandments. “If our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in . . . Jesus Christ, and to love one another” (1 Jn 3:21-23).

Remaining in Christ—If we abide in Him and He in us, we receive what we ask (Jn 15:7). Remaining in moment-by-moment touch with Christ is a condition of prayer. William Barclay points out that the closer we stay to Christ, the more often we will offer acceptable prayers, and the more we “pray aright, the greater the answer we receive.”

Praying in His name and for His sake—“I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father” (John 14:13). The ultimate test for any prayer of petition is whether or not I can say directly to Jesus, “Give me this for Your sake and for the glory of Your name.”

See William. Barclay, Daily Study Bible, Letters of John and Jude, 114-16.

Ask the students to personalize the conditions of prayer studied in this exercise by writing about them in their journals. Give them class time to do journaling if your time budget allows.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Use this sentence stem to facilitate review of today's lesson. If the student responses leave out an important element, as the learning leader, bring it to their attention.

The one thing about this lesson that stands out for me is . . .

Looking Ahead

Next lesson we study the spiritual discipline and devotional skill of journaling. Together we will “harvest” our journals.

Homework

Direct students to the Student Guide.

Journal Prompts

- In your journal write a prayer of confession that could be used in a worship service. Be sure to word it to take in all three dimensions of confession used in today's lesson.
- Use one of the four methods of intercessory prayer explored in today's lesson. After putting it into practice for several days, reflect on it in your journal.
- Write a dialogue with the apostle John about his “conditions of prayer” that were studied in this lesson.

Harvesting Our Journals

Bring to class the spiritual life journal that you have been writing in since the first day of this course. The learning leader will check to see that you have the journal with you. The learning leader will not read your spiritual life journal in detail but will simply look to see what kind of regular entries are made and in what ways your journal is organized.

No one will be pressured to share anything from the journal that he or she wishes to keep private, but we will harvest the best of the journaling experience as we share in small groups.

Punctuate the Finish

“Our prayers must mean something to us if they are to mean anything to God” (Maltbie D. Babcock)

Lesson 13

Journaling as a Spiritual Discipline

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Why Keep a Spiritual Life Journal?	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 13-1 Resource 13-2
0:45	What Goes into a Spiritual Journal and Famous Journals	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 13-3 Resource 13-4
1:05	Harvesting Student Journals	Small-Group Sharing	Student journals Resource 13-5
1:25	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Resource 13-6 Student Guide

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

Review the section on journaling from the introductory pages of this manual.

E. Dee Freeborn, et al., *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 115-22.

Ronald Klug, *How to Keep a Spiritual Journal* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1993), 1-115.

Susan A. Muto, *Pathways to Spiritual Living* (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1984), 94-111.

Richard Peace, *Spiritual Journaling* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1998), 1-111.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- understand the historic and current values and techniques of spiritual journaling
- embrace the discipline of spiritual journaling as a means to deepen their relationship with God, enhance spiritual growth, increase self-knowledge, and integrate their lives
- pledge to do spiritual journaling regularly—even beyond the duration of this course
- evaluate their journaling experiences so far and share their insights with class members

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Journaling

Assign for next lesson

Bible Study: Fasting

1. Fasting food for the body in order to provide a feast for the soul.
2. Fasting indulgence in favor of chastity (discipline of sexual urges).
3. Fasting social company in order to make room for solitude.
4. Fasting noise and entertainments in order to make time for silence.
5. Fasting acquisitiveness in order to live in frugality or Christian simplicity.
6. Fasting self-promotion in favor of secrecy.

Find out what the Bible says about these themes. Start your search with Matthew 6:16-18, Psalm 1:2, Isaiah 30:15-16, and add other passages that relate to the types of fasting listed above.

Journal Prompt

After this week's intensive study of spiritual journaling, implement at least two "upgrades" in your journal. Be prepared to share the upgrades with your group if asked.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Motivator

The recovery of journaling as a spiritual discipline has brought back an important part of the Christian heritage. Some of the most important literature in the world is the journals of pilgrims whose recorded journey still lights our way to spiritual formation.

You may have read some of these journals. At the top of the list is Augustine's *Confessions*. The journal is not about confessing dark, wicked sins (though some are included); it is more about confessions of faith, that is, affirmations of belief and devotion. Blaise Pascal's journal, *Penses*, is a must-read. John Wesley's journal has been reprinted many times. Wesley almost required his preachers and lay leaders to keep daily journals. Because of that we probably know more about the Methodist revival in 18th-century England than any other Christian era. The journal of John Woolman, the Quaker who led the fight against slavery in America, is included in the Harvard Classics. Other notable journals are those of Teresa of Avila, Julian of Norwich, Hildegard of Bingen, Evelyn Underhill, and Henri Nouwen. Dag Hammarskjöld's journal, *Markings*, has gone through 20 printings. The journal of Danish theologian Søren Kierkegaard is ranked as world-class literature.

At this point review what was said about journaling for this course in the opening lesson of this class. See the counsel on journaling in the front of this manual.

Orientation

The journal for this course is a "focused journal" that centers on your devotional and spiritual life. Many kinds of journals get written in every day. In diaries and general journals people record about everything that goes on in their lives. Some keep work or professional journals recording key developments in the workplace. Teachers often keep professional journals about their work with individual students. Some persons keep journals of their dreams. Some people meticulously keep family journals with cute saying the kids say at every birthday and Christmas and still cuter photos of it all.

The journal for this course, however, focuses on your spiritual journey as you interact with class content,

Scripture, your inner self, and with the Lord. Your work, family, and events of everyday life will be included in your responses when they bring spiritual joys, problems, and issues. This journal, however, is not the place to record the recipe for lemon chiffon cake, the photo of Aunt Sophie and Uncle Fred's 50th anniversary, or your clever scheme to outwit those telemarketers who dial in at dinnertime.

Through the centuries believers have found good reasons to write a spiritual journal. Today we explore the values and techniques of this spiritual discipline.

Learner Objectives

Refer students to the Student Guide.

To help students

- understand the historic and current values and techniques of spiritual journaling
- embrace the discipline of spiritual journaling as a means to deepen their relationship with God, enhance spiritual growth, increase self-knowledge, and integrate their lives
- pledge to do spiritual journaling regularly—even beyond the duration of this course
- evaluate their journaling experiences so far and share their insights with class members

Lesson Body

Lecture/Discussion: Why Keep a Spiritual Life Journal?

(35 minutes)

Teacher Enrichment Quotations:

The quotes in this column can be used to give the students something extra in your lecture.

Why not make "quote posters" of some of them to add atmosphere to the classroom. They could be posted during your lecture or before the class arrives.

Use your own experience here if possible.

Refer students to Resource 13-1

"Journal writing should never become a grim chore. If you see it that way, you will not do it for long . . . Writing in your journal is not a task you must perform perfectly. Go at it in the spirit of creative play . . . Let your journal-writing time be a Sabbath time for you, an enjoyable, quiet time, even a gift you give yourself. Think of the solitude connected with your journal as part of the abundant life God wants you to have." . . . (Ronald Klug, How to Keep a Spiritual Journal [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1993], 58).

From Holiness Today, June 1999, 27.

Last night I browsed my journal from 1982. The grandkids were toddlers then, one was not even born yet. I noted the prayers I was bringing to God then (some long since answered, a couple still in the Lord's in-box), the events I celebrated, the quotations I had gleaned from books that have now gone out of my library, but thanks to the journal, not out of my life yet. A host of good reasons to keep a spiritual life journal came flooding back. The list is as long as the line at the unemployment office, but I will try to be brief.

The List

1. You will learn a lot that you really need to know about your inner being, what Loren Eiseley called that "ghost continent" within. Your journal will become a sort of mirror of self and soul. "And all of us . . . seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image" (2 Cor 3:18, NRSV). We are, as Thomas Aquinas said, to "gaze with love on God and share what has been seen with others." The first one the mirror reveals is we ourselves in all our need. A journal is a mirror that helps keep us honest with ourselves. As Huck Finn discovered, "You can't pray a lie. I found that out."

2. Life patterns will emerge, revealing that your life has not been as haphazard as you thought. You will come to see the footprints of the seeking God marching through your life. C. S. Lewis gives us food for thought: "We think we have chosen our friends. In reality, a different birth date . . . a different college, taking the 'other job'—any of these changes might have kept us apart from our current set of friends. . . . As you look back, you discover that a Secret Master of Ceremonies has been at work. And . . . He is still on the job."

3. Your capacities and skills in Bible study, meditation, confession, and prayer will increase. Evil forces, and even neutral ones make it hard for the Christian to stay close to God. We need to develop the skills of the devotional life. If some believers were given an hour to pray, they would not know what to do or how to proceed. Journaling sharpens your spiritual tools.

"Pausing . . . to jot down our thoughts has a way of quieting and uncluttering our overactive, decentered lives . . . to find [again] our lost center in Christ" (Susan A. Muto, Pathways to Spiritual Living [Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1984], 96).

4. A regular time to reflect and write can help bring integration to the flashing forces that fragment thought, befuddle hearts, clutter agendas, and reduce you and me to flustered ineffectiveness. The journaling time stops the frenzied flow of experience and helps you look at it again, make sense of it all, and set priorities.

"I know that a faith that does not hold my intellect will soon not hold my heart" (E. Stanley Jones. Quoted by Klug, 25).

5. Journaling helps to clarify your unexamined assumptions, presumptions, and opinions inherited or adopted from the culture by measuring them against Christian standards. We live too much of our lives out untested and in sub-Christian traditions, what Susan Muto calls "prefocal vagueness" (*Pathways to Spiritual Living*, 99). An intriguing new book is called *Can Asians Think?* The author, an Asian himself, has no doubts about the intelligence of Asians. His point: Asians are not required to think because powerful cultural traditions make the decisions for them. Whom they will marry, their status in the family, their personal conduct, their vocation, and what they will do with their money—all this and more will be dictated by the culture.

From Wesley Tracy, Reflecting God, 9.

"Keeping God's love and forgiveness uppermost . . . prevents . . . becoming merely self-analytical. Journal writers know that they must guard against excessive introspection . . . looking at themselves under a microscope, trying to analyze every fault and failing, every small success or consolation" (Susan A. Muto, Pathways, 99).

6. Journaling is one way that you explore the uniqueness of your own spiritual journey. Don't go through life imitating the religious experiences of others. God has a faith journey plotted to meet your unique needs, vulnerabilities, gifts, and strengths. Your journal helps you learn your own story. "It is a book in which you carry out the greatest of life's adventures—the discovery of yourself."

From H. J. Cargas and Roger Bradley, Keeping a Spiritual Journal (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981), 8.

7. Your spiritual journal will help you discover and act upon the "aha" moments—those times when two or three ideas connect and a life-changing insight is born. Perhaps no greater insight comes than the one in which you discover that God is not a part of your life but that you are a little part of His life.

8. Your journal will become a friend and coach as you face those “crossroad” or “hinge” moments when you must filter powerful emotions and weigh decisions, opportunities, and alternatives about family, vocation, and life.

*“To miss the joy is to miss all,”
...Robert Louis Stevenson.*

*From The Upward Call, Beacon Hill
Press of Kansas City, 1994), 115.*

From Klug, 46.

9. Journaling helps many people develop a confident lifestyle marked by joy, playfulness, and hope. E. Dee Freeborn says that journaling adds a “serendipitous dimension of hilaritas, of cheerfulness into the holy life-style.” Secure in Christ, these journalers don’t take themselves too seriously. Your joys are great gifts from God. These moments deserve to be treasured, pondered, relived, and cherished,” writes Ronald Klug. Journaling about them serves as “a good antidote to self-pity and depression.”

10. Journaling can help break the power of painful memories of the past. Richard Peace writes about a man whose father repeatedly brutalized him. Journaling helped him escape the awful prison of those memories. “Often the act of making memories concrete [by putting them and our responses to them in writing] robs them of their power over us. We bring them from the darkness into the light.”

From Peace, 44.

*“A journal helps you to see if you
are still on the Way or sidetracked
. . . in some pleasant spot that has
you deceived” (Robert Wood, A
Thirty Day Experiment in Prayer
[Nashville: The Upper Room,
1978], 14).*

From Muto, 106.

11. Your journal can sometimes serve as a safety valve for emotions that threaten to get out of control. Did you ever experience the therapy of writing a stern letter and then have the good sense not to mail it? Writing in your journal can be like that sometimes. Susan Muto says, “Writing releases pent-up, potentially volcanic emotions. I can let go of a lot that disturbs me when I . . . write. Immense mountains are relativized into normal molehills, once I see them sketched on paper. If I don’t write out these hurts and angers, they have a way of festering inside.”

12. Journaling is about growth in grace, that is, Christlikeness. As we gaze upon the face of the Savior we come to reflect the Lord’s image more and more (2 Cor 3:18). Journaling helps keep the disciple’s attention on the things that matter most.

For Discussion

Use the questions at right as a way to clarify and review.

Allow the students to respond.

Which two of the 12 reasons for keeping a journal have been most significant to you as you have worked on your journal for this class?

Which one doesn't make much sense to you?

If you could add one reason for keeping a spiritual journal to this list, what would it be?

Objections to Keeping a Journal

"Listen, Mister, show me in the Bible where it says that I have to do that!" Journaling is not commanded like prayer or the sacraments are. Jesus did not say, "Journal in remembrance of Me." And surely there will be nonjournalers in heaven. Some people can't seem to make journaling a useful discipline, but millions more do. It is a spiritual discipline that one should not ignore—even if your first few tries at it seem as futile as trying to get a rose to bloom in a snowstorm.

Other people are afraid that someone else will find and read their private writings. That can happen, but the privacy problem can be easily handled. Keep your journal in a private place. If you are recording sensitive matters such as personal relationships with troublesome folks, use coded initials. If you are praying over a temptation or sin with which you are struggling, use code words or enigmatic initials. Your journal is your private property.

"Look, I have three kids, three jobs, and I get about three hours of sleep a night—I don't have time to keep a journal!" That's the most frequent objection. That's what you'll say if you want to avoid the upward call that devotional journaling offers.

Most of us need to learn to manage our time instead of letting it manage us. One of my favorite games is "Make It Go Away." When my schedule starts to frazzle me I start making things go away. I resign from a couple of committees, cancel a few appointments, postpone a chore or two, and say "no" to the next writing assignment. I urge you to make time for journaling, for yourself. If you do not find yourself alone, you will not find yourself at all, and you will not find God, either.

"The call to holiness beckons us to return to . . . single-hearted, awe-filled, grateful abandonment to God's will. . . . There is no excuse . . . to remain an hour-a-Sunday Christian. We are called to so much more" (Susan Muto, Pathways, 31).

Bear in mind that journaling is no substitute for public worship, Christian fellowship, small-group accountability, the holy sacraments, or active Christian service. It is about your personal walk with the Lord.

Journal writing should never become a grim chore. If it does become a chafing duty, you will give it up pronto. Approach it in a spirit of discipleship, yet with a spirit of creative play. Your journaling time can soon become a Sabbath of “restful presence.” Keeping a spiritual journal is a gift to yourself, yet it is not selfish because it helps you give yourself to the Lord. See if it doesn’t help you toward the abundant spiritual life to which the Lord is calling you in the silences of your heart.

The Pledge

Give this challenge to the students.

Will you launch out into a spiritual life journaling adventure? Pledge to take a few minutes a day for yourself and your journal. Resource 13-2 is an affirmation form. Notice it isn’t a contract, but an affirmation of intention. If you mess up and miss a few days, no one expects you to don sackcloth and ashes. If you fail or forget, get back in step and pick up where you left off. If you are willing to give this a try, sign on below.

Affirmation

Refer students to Resource 13-2.

I do take growth in Christlikeness seriously. Therefore, I covenant with myself to start and finish this spiritual life devotional journey. I promise with all my heart to take some time each day for my Lord, my journal, and myself. My plan is to spend _____ minutes a day for _____ days each week with my journal for the duration of this course and for at least three additional months.

Signed _____

Date _____

Lecture: What Goes into a Spiritual Journal?

(20 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 13-3.

Types of Entries

Journalers often make entries in categories such as the following. One will not write in all of these categories daily. Usually two or three areas will dominate a day’s entries.

Go over this list explaining each type of entry in your own words. Be brief.

Point out to students that it is not so much the events themselves that should go into a spiritual journal, but one's moral, personal, and spiritual reactions and responses to them.

1. Major events, significant happenings in your work or study.
2. Family matters.
3. Key relationships and conversations at home, school, and work.
4. Important ideas encountered from reading, thinking, writing, or discussion.
5. Achievement or failures that occurred this day.
6. Feelings: the strongest feelings of contentment, joy, happiness, hope. The emotional lows, depression, discouragement, fear, guilt, worry, etc.
7. Internal happenings: intuitions, new appreciations, inner convictions, and insights about your character or self.
8. Major news stories: floods, war, strikes, peace treaties, etc.
9. Notable physical experiences: exercise, work, illness, exhaustion, etc.
10. Spiritual events: prayer, Bible study, worship, etc.
11. Affirmations, conclusions, decisions, commitments made, or beliefs clarified or confirmed.
12. Spiritual failure, besetting sins, repentance, etc. Acts of ministry or Christian service.

Sampling Famous Journals

John Wesley's Journal

Refer students to Resource 13-4.

You may want to read aloud the journal entries from Wesley and Augustine. Or, to save time, you may choose to let your Base Groups meet and read them out loud.

Follow the discussion suggestions that follow the journal excerpts.

I returned to London; and on Sunday 22 buried the remains of Elizabeth Duchesne; a person eminently upright of heart, yet for many years a child of labour and sorrow. For near forty years she was zealous of good works, and . . . shortened her days by labouring for the poor beyond her strength. But her end is peace. She now rests from her labours, and her works follow her.

Tues. 31—We concluded the year with solemn praise to God [the New Year's Eve watch night service]. . . . It has never been intermitted one year . . . since the year 1738; in which my brother and I began to preach that strange doctrine of salvation by faith.

Wed. January 1—We met, as usual, to renew our covenant with God [The Wesley Covenant Service]. It was a solemn season, wherein many found his power present to heal.

Thurs. 2—I began expounding, in order, the book of Ecclesiastes. I never before had so clear a sight either of the meaning or the beauties of it. Neither did I imagine that the several parts of it were in so exquisite a manner connected together, all tending to prove the

grand truth—that there is no happiness out of [outside of] God.

Wed. 8—I looked over the manuscripts of that great and good man, Charles Perronet. I did not think he had so deep communion with God. I know exceeding few that equal him; and had he had a University education; there would have been few finer writers in England.

Mon. 13—I took the opportunity of spending an hour every morning with the Preachers, as I did with my pupils at Oxford.

Wed. 15—I began visiting those of our society who lived in Bethnal-Green hamlet. Many of them I found in such poverty that few could conceive of. . . . O why do not all the rich that fear God constantly visit the poor? Can they spend part of their spare time better? Certainly not. So they will find in that day when “every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.”

Such another scene I saw the next day. . . . I have not found any such distress, no, not in the prison of Newgate. One poor man was just creeping out of his sick-bed, to his ragged wife and three little children; who were more than half naked, and the very picture of famine; when one bringing in a loaf of bread, they all ran, seized upon it, and tore it to pieces in an instant.”

From The Works of John Wesley, ed. Thomas Jackson, 3rd ed., 14 vols. (London: Methodist Book Room, 1872; reprint, Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1978), 4: 91-92.

St. Augustine’s *Confessions*

An excerpt from book eight of his journal, Confessions.

At age 31 Augustine was trying to break away from a licentious life of wine, women, and song—particularly women.

The very toy of toys, and vanities of vanities, my ancient mistresses, still held me; they plucked my fleshly garment, and whispered softly, “Dost thou cast us off?” . . . What defilements did they suggest! What shame! . . . Yet they did retard me, so that I hesitated . . . to shake myself free from them . . . a violent habit saying to me, “Thinkest thou, thou canst live without them? . . .”

Contenance herself . . . a fruitful mother of children of joys . . . smiled on me . . . “Cast thyself fearlessly upon Him, He will receive, and will heal thee. . . . “Stop thine ears against those thy unclean members . . . that they may be mortified” . . . This controversy in my heart was self against self . . .

But when a deep consideration had from the secret bottom of my soul drawn together and heaped up all my misery in the sight of my heart, there arose a mighty storm, bringing a shower of tears. . . .

I cast myself down . . . under a certain fig-tree, giving full vent to my tears. . . . “O Lord, how long? How long? . . . Remember not our former iniquities,” for I felt that I was held by them. . . .

So was I speaking, and weeping in the most bitter contrition . . . when . . . I heard . . . a voice . . . chanting . . . “Take up and read; Take up and read.” . . . I arose; interpreting it to be no other than the command from God. . . . Eagerly . . . I seized, opened [the volume of the Apostle] and in silence read the section, on which my eyes first fell: “Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh,” in concupiscence. . . . Instantly . . . a light as it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away.

From The Confessions of St. Augustine, trs. Edward B. Pusey (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1960), 145-48.

For Reflection and Discussion

Ask students to meet in their Base Groups to process the discussion of the two journal excerpts. Let each group choose one of the excerpts to work with. Have them begin by reading the journal excerpt aloud in their group. Call on the spokesperson from each group to share their answers.

1. Review the “Types of Entries” at the beginning of this learning activity.
2. Identify as many of the “types of entries” as you can in the excerpt from John Wesley’s *Journal*, and from the excerpt from Augustine’s *Confessions*.
3. What type of entry dominated Wesley’s writing? Augustine’s?
4. What did you learn about John Wesley from this brief journal excerpt?
5. What did you learn about Aurelius Augustine from his journal?
6. What would a reader a hundred years from now learn about you if they dug up your journal from this class?
7. Are the concerns of Augustine and Wesley still relevant to us today? Would these same themes appear in journals of contemporary Christians?

Small Groups: Harvesting Our Spiritual Life Journals

(20 minutes)

Use the Base Groups to carry out this exercise as described. After the Base Groups of four have shared, call on each group to share the most significant idea that came up in their discussion.

You were to have brought your journals to class today. I will be checking to make sure that you did so. However, the journals will not be read like most assignments are. Your journal is still your private property. I will simply note how regularly entries were made, how the journal was organized, etc.

Assure all that privacy is important and that you will evaluate journals on the basis of whether or not they have been journaling.

Refer students to Resource 13-5.

While this learning activity calls on you to share your journaling experiences, no one will be pressured to reveal anything he or she does not wish to share.

First Round: Let each member of your group select one of the following and share his or her response to it.

Second Round: Ask each member to select another item and share her or his response. As time permits, go on to rounds three and four.

1. In what ways did the journaling experience deepen your relationship with God?
2. Did writing out your thoughts and experiences help you make any decisions?
3. What needed corrections in your service, discipline, attitudes, and relationships did the journaling experience pinpoint?
4. Did you divide your journal into several sections (spiritual diary, answered prayers, collected prayers and quotations, reflections on sermons, books or life events)? How did you arrange or organize your journal?
5. What journaling occasions or experiences caused you to rejoice and praise God?
6. If they made a television show based on your journal, what would the title of the program be?
7. Has the journaling experience helped you know yourself better? Has it produced any "I didn't know I was like that" comments or feelings?
8. What Bible verses or quotations from books, poems, lectures or discussions from this class, or sermons have appeared in your journal?
9. What music made its way into your journal? What was its significance?
10. Does your journal record any answers to prayer?
11. Would you recommend journaling as a spiritual discipline for new converts?
12. Has today's discussion given you any new ideas about how to make your future journaling more fruitful?
13. Journaling works better for some than others. How would you rate your recent journaling experience?
 - Journaling is something that I will continue to do.
 - The experience was valuable and satisfying for me.
 - I didn't get much out of it.
 - I didn't work very hard at planning and organizing my journal.
 - Some things I liked about journaling; some I didn't.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

Evaluate the lesson in terms of the objectives. The quiz at right is a tool made to do that.

Refer students to Resource 13-6.

1. To what extent has this series of learning experiences increased your knowledge of the values and techniques of spiritual journaling?
A. Greatly B. Somewhat C. Little
2. Do you feel more strongly than ever that spiritual journaling can nourish your own spiritual life?
A. Definitely B. Yes C. Not really
3. When you signed the Affirmation or pledge to do spiritual journaling even after this class is over what was your attitude about it?
A. Gladly B. Okay C. Are you kidding?
4. How would you rate the experience of sharing from each other's journal?
A. Very helpful B. Useful C. Wasted time

Look Ahead

Encourage the students to read one of the resources.

Next lesson we will be working on fasting as a spiritual discipline.

Resources to help you prepare include:

E. Dee Freeborn, et al., *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), chapters 7 and 8, 95-114.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), 145-47.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 98-100.

Assign Homework

Refer students to the Student Guide.

Bible Study

Next lesson we deal with five kinds of fasting.

1. Fasting food for the body in order to provide a feast for the soul.
2. Fasting indulgence in favor of chastity (discipline of sexual urges).
3. Fasting social company in order to make room for solitude.
4. Fasting noise and entertainments in order to make time for silence.
5. Fasting acquisitiveness in order to live in frugality or Christian simplicity.
6. Fasting self-promotion in favor of secrecy.

Find what the Bible says about these themes. Start your search with Matthew 6:16-18, Psalm 1:2, Isaiah 30:15-16, and add other passages that relate to the types of fasting listed above.

Journal Prompt

After this week's intensive study of spiritual journaling, implement at least two "upgrades" in your journal. Be prepared to share the upgrades with your group if asked.

Punctuate the Finish

Journals enable us . . .
to move from fog to clarity,
to see, feel and live.
It is much easier to live in the past
(through memories)
or in the future (through fantasies)
than to live in the present.
Journals make the present come alive.
Richard Peace, *Spiritual Journaling*
(Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1998), 22.

Close in prayer.

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Lesson 14

Fasting and the Disciplines of Abstinence

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Fasting and Chastity	Lecture/Discussion/ Small Groups	Resource 14-1 Resource 14-2 Resource 14-3
0:35	Solitude and Silence	Lecture/Small Groups	Resource 14-4 Resource 14-5
1:00	Simplicity and Secrecy	Lecture/Small Groups	Resource 14-6 Resource 14-7
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

E. Dee Freeborn, et al., *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), chapter 7, "Blessed Subtraction," 95-106.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), 145-52.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 98-104.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*, 38-40.

Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1988), 156-75.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- define and explain the key concepts of the disciplines of abstinence
- embrace and own some of the disciplines of abstinence as valuable for their own Christian life
- experience some of the disciplines of abstinence and later evaluate and write about their usefulness in their spiritual journey

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Bible study
Journaling

Assign for next lesson

Plan a Half-Hour Session of SOLITUDE and SILENCE.

Write a one- to two-page paper on the struggle you had to find the time, the interruptions, your thoughts and feelings about the experience. Do not write during the half-hour period of Solitude and Silence. Reflect on it afterwards. To be handed in at the beginning of the next lesson.

Journal Prompts

- Choose one of the disciplines of abstinence to practice this week. Reflect on your choice and your experience in your journal.
- Prepare a paragraph outline of a sermon you might preach on the "Disciplines of Abstinence." State your scripture base. The theme of the sermon, the objective of the sermon, and the church or other ministry situation and the age-group of the target audience. This is for your journal, not to be handed in separately. If your Base Group is meeting beyond the classroom, share sermon ideas.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Motivator

A 12-pound hawksbill turtle crawled up to die on a Honolulu beach. Concerned environmentalists arranged an autopsy, which showed that one quarter of its weight was plastic. Its intestines contained:

- several beads
- a comb
- a golf tee
- a toy wheel
- a balloon
- a toothpaste cap
- part of a medical syringe
- baggies and
- a plastic flower

The living turtle became a dead trash barrel.

The worldly environment in which we live is also full of trash. The devil makes sure that to live for God we must continually swim through a swirl of trash at work, at school, in the neighborhood, and even in our homes because of television, the Internet, etc. That's his job. He loves his work and he is good at it.

From Reflecting God, 93.

Orientation

Without the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the disciplines of abstinence we face risks similar to those of the hawksbill turtle. The plastic manufacturers made tools and toys that looked good enough to eat. Just so, the devil and sinful culture often make excess and sin look good enough to eat. The practice of fasting and the disciplines of abstinence keep us in tune with the Spirit and help us live a balanced life.

The disciplines of abstinence deal primarily with normal human needs and desires. Food, drink, sex, companionship, and sleep are not inherently evil. Neither are our desires for convenience, material security, comfort, approval and acceptance, or a good reputation. But any of these can become a sinful obsession or emotional crutch that throws our spiritual life out of balance. When food, sex, security, and "lust for praise" run a "rebellious and harmful course" they can become "primary hosts of sin in our personalities."

From Willard, 159.

A study of The Spirit of the Disciplines (chapter 9), The Upward Call (chapter 7), and Reflecting God (chapter 17) will prepare you, the teacher, to guide the three learning activities of the day. See Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher at the beginning of this lesson.

Using the liturgy of Fasting we shall explore six disciplines of abstinence today. They are:

- fasting food for the body in order to provide a feast for the soul
- fasting indulgence in favor of chastity (discipline of sexual urges)
- fasting social company in order to make room for solitude
- fasting noise and entertainments in order to make time for silence
- fasting acquisitiveness in order to live in frugality or Christian simplicity
- fasting self-promotion in favor of secrecy

We will visit a pair of the disciplines of abstinence in each of today's three learning activities.

Learner Objectives

Refer students to the Student Guide.

To help students

- define and explain the key concepts of the disciplines of abstinence
- embrace and own some of the disciplines of abstinence as valuable for their own Christian life
- experience some of the disciplines of abstinence and later evaluate and write about their usefulness in their spiritual journey

Lesson Body

Study Guide

Refer students to Resource 14-1.

If your class is large enough, use the Jigsaw method. Have each Base Group study one set of the discipline pairs and report their findings to the class. That way all six disciplines can be under study concurrently. Each student will participate in the study of one pair and hear reports on the other two pairs of the disciplines of abstinence.

This Study Guide will be the discussion tool for each of the six disciplines of abstinence studied in today's lesson.

1. What scriptural support can be found for this discipline?
2. What traditional support can be found for this discipline? That is, what has the church generally taught on this subject?
3. List ideas from observation and experience about the value of this discipline for Christians today.
4. A list of three to five guidelines that could usefully serve in your church or ministry situation.

The Disciplines of Fasting and Chastity

(25 minutes)

Fasting Food for the Body in Order to Provide a Feast for the Soul

Thoughts on Fasting

Refer students to Resource 14-2.

When you begin to deny the body food or drink (or sex) you will discover how used to being satisfied your body is. Its demand will be insistent, until fasting has become a usual discipline.

Fasting reveals how often we use food and drink as "comfort sources" because we lack emotional and spiritual health. Nothing promotes gluttony more than a low self-image, overwork, criticism, or failure in relationships.

From Willard, 166.

Fasting will "certainly demonstrate how powerful and clever our body is in getting its own way against our strongest resolves."

Fasting is giving up food so we can concentrate on the spiritual, not the physical. Fasting to lose weight or to participate in a hunger strike has little, if any, spiritual value.

From The Sermon on the Mount, Discourse 7 (Edward H. Sugden, ed., John Wesley's Fifty-Three Sermons [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983], 334).

John Wesley taught that fasting should always have the glory of God as its aim. “We fast to express our sorrow and shame for transgressions; to wait for an increase in purifying grace . . . to add . . . earnestness to our prayers . . . to avert the wrath of God, and to obtain all the . . . promises . . . made . . . in Jesus Christ.”

Fasting shows trust in God because the fasting believer finds a source for sustenance beyond food. Our belly is not our god—fasting regularly lets our body and us know that.

Fasting is a testimony that we understand that suffering is a part of discipleship.

Cited by Willard, 167.

Fasting leads to self-control in other areas of life. Thomas á Kempis in *The Imitation of Christ* wrote, “Refrain from gluttony and thou shalt the more easily restrain all the inclinations of the flesh.”

From Susan Muto, Pathways of Spiritual Living, 77.

Prayer needs fasting. “Prayer is the one hand with which we grasp the invisible; fasting, the other, with which we let loose and cast away the visible.”

Bible characters for whom fasting was very important include Moses, Elijah, David, Zechariah, Daniel, Jonah, Joel, Paul, Barnabas, Nehemiah, Isaiah, and Jesus of Nazareth.

Use Resource 14-1 for discussion.

Fasting Sexual Indulgence in Favor of Chastity

Thoughts on Chastity

Refer students to Resource 14-3.

To practice the discipline of chastity we “turn away from dwelling upon or engaging in the sexual dimensions of our relationships to others—even our husbands or wives.”

From Willard, 170.

Among the teacher enrichment sources cited for this lesson, only Willard's The Spirit of the Disciplines treats chastity.

Sex was God's idea, and as an expression of love between married partners it is good, even sacred.

Some mistakenly think that getting married is a license to abandon all sexual self-control.

Though sexual union is a very important part of marriage, it cannot carry all the freight. Marriages built on sexual attraction alone soon die.

Mutual abstention from sex in marriage can be an aid to the spiritual life (1 Cor 7:5).

The amount of human grief and suffering because of misuse of the sexual drive is horrifying. Therefore, “the will of God . . . [is] that each of you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor” (1 Thess 4:4, RSV). “Each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in the passion of lust like heathen who do not know God” (1 Thess 4:4, NRSV).

One evangelical denomination’s governing body passed a creedal statement noting that it is a violation of Christian propriety and the conscience of the church to treat one’s spouse like a pornographic object.

Abstaining from sexual thoughts and acts in marriage for a given time allows the Christian couple to live out the truth that physical urges are not to govern us.

Mastery over sexual conduct allows us to build friendships in the community of faith without sexual attraction always fouling the friendships. Chastity “confirms us in the practice of being very close to people without sexual entanglements.” Augustine said, “I fouled the springs of friendship with the concupiscence of lust.”

From Willard, 170.

Sexuality reaches into the essence of our beings. To deny that is to live a lie. To submit sexuality to the discipline of the Spirit is to be a true disciple. The discipline of chastity calls upon us to a proper life as males and females, refusing to let sex dominate and spoil the spiritual life.

Use Resource 14-1 for discussion.

The Disciplines of Solitude and Silence

(25 minutes)

The twin disciplines of solitude and silence may be harder to practice than fasting. In our hurried world finding a pocket of time for solitude and silence is like discovering the pearl of great price. It is in the practice of these disciplines that we learn the lessons that Evelyn Underhill wrote of: “Find out where your treasure really is. Discern substance from accident. Don’t confuse your meals with your life, and your clothes with your body. Don’t lose your head over what perishes. . . . Don’t mistake what you possess with what you are.”

From Herald of Holiness, Jan. 1998, 24.

Fasting Social Company to Make Room for Solitude

Thoughts on Solitude

Refer students to Resource 14-4.

Jesus repeatedly sought solitude.

Solitude as a spiritual discipline is more than just getting away to relax—though that can enhance your spiritual life. Solitude is seeking to be alone in hope that God will soon join you as you commune about the things that really matter.

Solitude has risks. You have to look inside. You can't depend on sitcoms and game shows or business meetings or soccer practice to keep your soul distracted.

Quote by Andre Gide.

“If you do not find yourself alone, you will not find yourself at all.”

*From July 24, 1983, part 4, p. 3.
Cited by Willard, 161.*

“It is not easy to be solitary unless you are born ruthless. Every solitary repudiates someone,” wrote Jessamyn West in the *Los Angeles Times*. That is, to be alone you almost always have to say no to a spouse, child, friend, or church committee.

We need to find solitude because the world in which we live, study, work, and do business is a world that conspires against God and godliness.

Solitude is especially important to the novice or rookie Christian.

We must scrutinize our schedules and find pockets of solitude—or we must change our lifestyles.

From Henri Nouwen, Out of Solitude (Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1974), 20.

“It is in solitude that we discover that being is more important than having, and that we are worth more than the result of our efforts. In solitude we discover that our life is not a possession to be defended, but a gift to be shared.”

Use Resource 14-1 for discussion.

Fasting Noise and Entertainment in Favor of Silence

Stop right now and listen to all the noises that interrupt our solitude: boom boxes, television, radios, traffic sounds, refrigerators humming and air-conditioners whirring, a barking dog, a dripping faucet,

a jangling telephone, a beeper. Yet your spiritual life will choke in the smog of this noise. Busyness and noise are the burglars who steal our solitude and silence and spoil the best fruit of the soul.

Thoughts on Silence

Refer students to Resource 14-5.

Cited by Willard, 163.

Solitude and silence go together, but silence goes beyond solitude. "Silence is the way to make solitude a reality," wrote Henri Nouwen.

From Pathways, 77.

Susan Muto says that we shun silence because it "evokes nameless misgivings, guilt feelings, strange disquieting anxiety."

Cited in Reflecting God, 146.

"Until you can sing and rejoice and delight in God as misers do in gold and kings in scepters" you will not "hasten to Him who calls you in the silences of your heart," says Thomas Traherne and Thomas Kelly.

From Herald of Holiness, Jan. 1998, 25.

"Busyness rapes relationships. It substitutes shallow frenzy for deep friendships. . . . It feeds the ego, but starves the inner man."

From Willard, 163.

"Silence is frightening because it strips us as nothing else does, throwing us upon the stark realities of our life. It reminds us of death, which will cut us off from this world and leave only us and God."

Did you ever notice how hard it is to be silent in the presence of others?

Novelist Faith Baldwin tells of New York visitors to her countryside home being unable to sleep because of the deafening silence.

Silence allows us to hear the gentle God whose only Son "will not . . . cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets" (Mt 12:19), but they will hear Him in the silence of their hearts.

Silence helps us learn the art of not speaking. Perhaps we then can take time to really listen for a change.

From Willard, 165.

We often speak out when we should be quiet because we want others to know how important we are. When we develop a quiet confidence born in silence before God we may have the wisdom, "when others come fishing for reassurance and approval send them to fish in deeper waters for their own inner quiet."

Use Resource 14-1 for discussion.

The Disciplines of Simplicity and Secrecy

(20 minutes)

Fasting the Acquiring of Things in Favor of Christian Simplicity or Frugality

Thoughts on Christian Simplicity

Refer students to Resource 14-6.

Frivolous consumption corrupts the soul and conspires against trust in God.

From On the Way, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 93.

Les L. Steele defines Christian simplicity as a “willingness to disentangle ourselves from too many commitments, relieve ourselves of debts and obligations that keep us anxious and burdened.”

Christian simplicity is the opposite of the credit-card addiction that says I should have everything now.

From Willard, 168.

In frugality we “abstain from using money or goods . . . in ways that merely gratify our desires or our hungers for status, glamour, or luxury.”

For an example of Christian simplicity, see Philippians 4: 11-13.

Financial debt can cause spiritual bondage.

A man who gave \$600 million to charity explained that he could only wear one pair of shoes, only eat one hamburger. So why have millions stacked up? Others needed it more.

Conspicuous consumption flaunted before the poor inspires them to disgust or envy.

Charles Warner, Herald of Holiness, Jan. 1998, 24.

“Simplicity is making the journey of life with just enough baggage.”

Use Resource 14-1 for discussion.

Read Hebrews 13:5 and Deuteronomy 8: 13-14.

Fasting Self-promotion in Order to Develop the Discipline of Secrecy

Thoughts on Secrecy

Refer to Resource 14-7.

From Spirit of the Disciplines, 172.

Dallas Willard describes the discipline of secrecy as abstaining from making our good deeds and qualities known.

Self-promotion is important in the business world where artists, writers, actors, and business executives hawk their portfolios and résumés. Whole books are written on just how to promote yourself. But self-promotion in the spiritual realm is a sure sign of sickness or sin.

Several ministers were in a meeting. One mentioned his teaching trip to Russia from which he had just returned. A second man then told about his own education trip to Russia. The third had to go back to high school days but told of a mission trip of two weeks in Moscow. The fourth man, I knew, had spent a whole year teaching pastors in Russia, but he remained silent. The discipline of secrecy, I thought. I almost envied him, because I was one of the three who just had to blab about my wonderful ministry in Russia!

A friend of mine recently gave a million dollars to a Christian school to construct a building—a building that will carry another man's name above the door. The discipline of secrecy.

Troy Winslow spent 27 years as a missionary to the Philippines. He never made more than \$15,000 in a year—until he retired and then he made a lot of money in the stock market. He never told me of his giving. But when I went to the Philippines to teach I kept running into gifts he had quietly bought for the field: A Jeep for the Jesus Film Ministry, a building for a Christian elementary school, a remodeled church, and several others. I had no idea he was quietly giving tens of thousands to missions. The discipline of secrecy.

From The Christian's Guide to Financial Freedom, Bill Martin and Wes Tracy, a video course, Nazarene Publishing House, 2000.

How strong is what John Wesley used to call the “thirst for praise.” Only the divinely enabled grace of secrecy can help us overcome that thirst.

From Willard, 172-73.

The practice of the discipline of secrecy helps us develop a relationship with God independent of the opinions of others.

Christian figures that are always bragging on themselves, showing off their credentials, and dropping names of the rich and famous are advertising more than their great achievements. They are also hawking their shallowness and their neglect of the grace of secrecy. Put them on your prayer list.

Read Philippians 2:3.

Use Resource 14-1 for discussion.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

In groups of four assign each student a letter: A, B, C, D.

Keep track of the time and call "time" at the end of each minute.

The Four-Minute Review:

In order to review the unit on the personal spiritual disciplines, student A will have one minute to tell the other three what he or she remembers about "Bible Study" (Lesson 10).

Student B will have one minute to tell the other three students what he or she recalls about "Prayer" (Lessons 11 and 12).

Student C will have one minute to share what he or she recalls about "Journaling" (Lesson 13).

Student D will have one minute to share what he or she recalls about today's lesson on the "Disciplines of Abstinence."

Looking Ahead

Next lesson we begin Unit 4: The Spiritual Disciplines of Community.

Assign Homework

Refer students to the Student Guide.

Plan a Half-Hour Lesson of SOLITUDE and SILENCE this week.

Write a one- to two-page paper on the struggle you had to find the time, the interruptions, your thoughts and feelings about the experience. Do not write during the half-hour period of Solitude and Silence, reflect on it afterwards. To be handed in at the beginning of the next class.

Journal Prompts

- Choose one of the disciplines of abstinence to practice this week. Reflect on your choice and your experience in your journal.
- Prepare a paragraph outline of a sermon you might preach on the "Disciplines of Abstinence." State your scripture base, the theme of the sermon, the objective of the sermon, and the church or other ministry situation and the age-group of the target audience. This is for your journal, not to be handed in separately. If your

Base Group is meeting beyond the classroom,
share sermon ideas.

Punctuate the Finish

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do . . . put oil on your head and wash your face so that it will not be obvious . . . that you are fasting” (Mt 6:16-18).

Jesus did not say, “IF you fast. . . .” He did not say, “You MUST fast” He did say, “WHEN you fast” And He said it twice in the Sermon on the Mount. No debate, no argument, no direct order—just the EXPECTATION that we would, of course, fast. So there is fasting squarely between a choice and a command.

In what ways do you work to meet the EXPECTATION of Christ that you will fast?

If “WORK” does not describe your effort to meet Christ’s expectation that you will fast, what word does? Why?

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Lesson 15

Formative Christian Worship

For Unit 4, Introduction and Objectives, see Resource 15-0

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Old Testament Worship	Small-Group Work	Resource 15-1
0:30	New Testament and Early Church Worship	Small-Group Study	Resource 15-2 Resource 15-3
0:50	Protestant Worship	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 15-4 Resource 15-5 Resource 15-6 Resource 15-7
1:40	Closing	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

Everett Leadingham, ed., *Worshipping God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1996).

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), 119-26.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 83-90.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*, 33-35.

Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 1-286.

Robert E. Weber, *Worship Old and New* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 17-217.

Morris A. Weigelt, et al., *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 55-67.

James F. White, *Protestant Worship* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 13-35, 150-216.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- understand some of the biblical and historical foundations of basic practices in Christian worship
- appreciate and embrace the tradition, nature, and practicality of the basic elements of Christian worship
- plan and lead worship experiences for the people of God that nourish the deeper spiritual life

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Paper on “Solitude and Silence”

Assign for next lesson

Choose one of these two

The Qualifications of a Worship Leader

Based on Robert Weber, *Worship Leader Magazine* and an article by Wes Tracy, *Herald of Holiness* (June 1994, 41) we came up with this “job description” list for a worship leader.

Write a paper of up to three pages (double-spaced) about this job description following these three steps:

- Step 1: Rank these in order of importance according to your best judgment.
Step 2: Defend and explain your top five rankings.
Step 3: What is your greatest weakness as a worship leader? Your best strength?

Job description:

- A working knowledge of Old Testament worship
- A working knowledge of New Testament and Early Church worship
- Know something of the development and history of Christian worship
- Have a good reputation as a spiritual person among the members of the congregation

- The ability to lead—that is, to get others to follow him or her
- Know something of the theology of worship
- Know something of the history of the use of music in worship
- Know something of the arts as they relate to worship
- Know something of how worship relates to other ministries such as evangelism, social concern, Christian education, etc.

Plan a Service of Formative Worship

Plan a service of worship for your church or ministry situation, keeping in mind the following:

- The purpose of worship is to glorify God.
- The elements of worship should emphasize the Trinity.
- The essential elements of classical Christian worship.
- The needs of people who will likely be in the congregation.
- The service should be “formative.” That is, it should help people grow spiritually.

Make out the order of service in detail. Include objective and subjective, directive and spontaneous elements. Cite the sermon text and theme.

Journal Prompts

Cite some worship practice that seems to help others but leaves you cold and empty. Prayerfully explore the uses and aim of that worship practice as well as why it doesn't touch you.

Carry on a written conversation with yourself probing this quotation:

“People argue about worship because they are talking about the most important thing in the universe—how to reach God. No wonder they have strong opinions. But once you understand the nature and history of some worship practice that is different from your own you no longer fear or fight it” (Noble Hansen).

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on two students to read their paper on Solitude and Silence.

Return and collect homework.

Motivator

Worship is not about primarily you or your bundle of felt needs, wishes, desires, good intentions, and the desire to escape the dull or threatening realities of life through a swooning spiritual experience. *Worship is about God.* We worship *God* because of who He is.

For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and glory are in His sanctuary (Ps 96:4-6).

Worship is not about performance! The worship leaders are not there to keep us amused and entertained; they are not performers fishing for double encores. They are to guide us in offering a sacrifice of worship to God. The “audience” in Christian worship is God; we the worshipers offer to God sacrifices that we pray will be acceptable. As Psalm 96:4-6 indicates, we worship because of who God is!

The word “worship” comes from Anglo-Saxon, *weorthscipe*—worth-ship. In other words, God’s worth, His worthiness calls us to adoration.

Why is God central in worship? This truth is expressed so clearly in Psalm 100 (NRSV): “Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs” (v. 2). Why? Because of who God is: “Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture” (v. 3). Look at verse 4: “Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.” Why? “For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations” (v. 5). God’s “steadfast love” is God’s love that won’t quit. Who God is and His care for us motivates Christians to worship. It’s no wonder we adore Him!

Though private worship has great value, group worship of God is the basic food for spiritual formation. Nothing on earth, certainly no private spiritual discipline, takes the place of corporate worship. Whatever else the Church is, it is first of all a worshipping community, a family of faith. Among the worshipping community we discover our identity and our gifts for Christian service.

In too many evangelical congregations you see people, isolated from each other, carrying out their private “just you and me, Jesus” type of worship in a public place. About all they share with the others is that they are doing their private prayer in the same building. Sometimes the worship leaders, or song directors aid and abet the “private worship in public” syndrome. They close their eyes, shutting out the worshipers, and sing and talk and pray as if they were at home alone. There is very little sense of coming together as the people of God.

John Knox, 1989, 77.

From The Mystery of Sacrifice (Harrisburg, PA, 1991), 71.

But Maria Harris warns in *Fashion Me a People*, “One Christian is no Christian; we go to God together or we do not go at all.” Evelyn Underhill reminds us that “the true consecrated life, however fully given to God, . . . is never self-supporting.”

Orientation

The changing worship styles of recent years have sent scholars scrambling back in history to discover the essentials of classic Christian worship. In this lesson we will traipse along and look over their shoulders, examining Old Testament worship, early Christian worship, and the history and trends in Protestant worship. Then we will take steps toward planning worship experiences that are formative—that is worship services that glorify God and nourish spiritual formation.

Learner Objectives

Direct students to the Student Guide.

To help students

- understand some of the biblical and historical foundations of basic practices in Christian worship
- appreciate and embrace the tradition, nature, and practicality of the basic elements of Christian worship
- plan and lead worship experiences for the people of God that nourish the deeper spiritual life

Lesson Body

Small Groups: Old Testament Worship

(15 minutes)

This lesson has a lot of content for students to get their minds around.

The first two sections of the Lesson Body can be done in class without advance study. Let your students work in groups of two or three.

All learning activities for this lesson are adapted from a seminar, "Worship—Believers in the Presence of God," led by Wesley Tracy in 1998 at the Leadership Conference held at European Nazarene Bible College, and at a pastors' and teachers' conference at Visayan Nazarene Bible College, Cebu City, Philippines.

Refer students to Resource 15-1.

Work together in pairs or triads on this investigation of a biblical worship event. The lines of the Scripture passage are numbered on the left. Then in the space to the left of various elements of worship listed below this passage write the number(s) of the line(s) where you can find that element in the passage.

Exodus 24:1-8

1. Then he said to Moses, "Come up to the Lord, you and
2. Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel.
3. You are to worship at a distance, but Moses alone is to
4. approach the Lord; the others must not come near. And the
5. people may not come up with him."
6. When Moses went and told the people all the Lord's words
7. and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything the
8. Lord has said we will do." Moses then wrote down
9. everything that the Lord had said.
10. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the
11. foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars
12. representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young

13. Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and
14. sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord.
15. Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the
16. other half he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book
17. of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded,
18. “We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey.”
19. Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and
20. said, “This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has
21. made with you in accordance with all these words” (NIV).

Elements of Biblical Worship

- _____ God initiates it.
- _____ Rooted in an event.
- _____ Covenantal in nature.
- _____ Happens at appointed times and places.
- _____ Calls for a response from the people.
- _____ Includes celebration.
- _____ Ratification by a sacrifice, ratifying or sealing meal.
- _____ Ritual acts of remembrance and renewal.
- _____ Reading and proclamation of the Word of God.
- _____ Sign-acts or symbols.
- _____ A divine-human encounter.
- _____ The people pledge to go forth and obey.

For Reflection and Discussion

As time allows, let the students respond.

Identify the biblical elements of worship that were present in the most recent worship service you attended or planned.

Exploring New Testament and Early Christian Worship

(20 minutes)

Read Robert E. Weber’s Worship Old and New, chapters 4 and 5, as enrichment that will help you prepare this presentation.

For special assignments—ask students to check out all the worship-related references cited in the presentation and write on the content and form of N. T. worship.

Hints About Worship in the New Testament

Jesus himself went often to the Temple at the seasons of feasts and sacrifices. He preached and proclaimed that the Temple should be pure, holy, a place of prayer

Another assignment could be "Spiritual Formation in the Hymns of the New Testament." The five hymns cited could be studied. You could also study the doxologies used in Rev 4:8, 11; 7:12; 11:17-18; 15:3-4 with an eye to their content and how to use them in worship services.

Refer students to Resource 15-2.

and not commerce. Jesus attended the synagogue on the Sabbath.

New Testament Christians used many Old Testament ceremonies, but reinterpreted them as having been fulfilled in Christ. For example: the Passover lamb was Christ, the Temple was now the "body of Christ," and the Levitical priesthood gave way to the "people of God" who were a "royal priesthood" (1 Pet 2:9). The old Sabbath gave way to the Lord's Day (1 Cor 16:1-2). The new and better way, Christ's way is described in some detail in Hebrews 7–10.

Thus New Testament worship was Christ-centered from beginning to end.

New Testament worship included singing of psalms and hymns (1 Cor 14:13-17; Eph 5:19). Some New Testament hymns include the Kenosis hymn (Phil 2:6-11); the Magnificat (Lk 1:46-55); the Benedictus (Lk 1:68-79); the Gloria in Excelsis Deo (Lk 2:14), and the Nunc Dimittis (Lk 2:29-32).

New Testament worship included "blessings" (1 Cor 1:3; 16:23) and doxologies (Rev 4:8, 11; 7:12; 11:17-18; 15:3-4).

New Testament worship included prayers (1 Tim 2:1-8).

New Testament worship included baptism (Acts 2:41; 8:34-40; Rom 6:1-4) and the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:20-34).

Preaching the gospel was an important part of New Testament worship: "What I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day" (1 Cor 15:3-4) and "Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God . . . interceding for us" (Rom 8:34).

The Early Church also developed creeds and confessions of faith that were used in worship to affirm orthodox belief.

Justin Martyr's Order of Service

The earliest order of service that we have is from Justin Martyr, about AD 150. Working in pairs or triads, read aloud Justin Martyr's description of worship in the

Refer students to Resource 15-3.

See Robert Weber, *Worship Old and New*, chapter 5, for more information related to early Christian worship.

Early Church. Then drawing on this description respond to the questions that follow the quotation.

“And on the day called Sunday there is a meeting in one place of those who live in cities or in the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. When the reader has finished, the president in a discourse urges and invites [us] to the imitation of these noble things. Then we all stand up together and offer prayers . . . When we have finished the prayer, bread is brought and wine and water, and the president similarly sends up prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his ability, and the congregation assents, saying the Amen. The distribution, and the reception of consecrated [elements] by each one, takes place and they are sent to the absent by the deacons.”

What does this passage tell us about:

1. the place or location of worship?
2. the time of worship?
3. the leader of worship?
4. the posture and use of prayer in worship?
5. the Lord’s Supper, its structure, meaning, and significance?
6. the place of Scripture in worship?
7. the practice and nature of preaching in worship?
8. participation and response of the people?
9. the role of music in worship?

Lecture: Exploring Protestant Worship

(35 minutes)

This lecture explains Resource 15-4. It is based on James White’s Protestant Worship, chapters 9–12.

Encourage students to take careful notes using Resources 15-4, 15-5, 15-6. They will have plenty of questions and comments for a discussion period after the lecture.

Depending on your time limits, you may choose to add extra time to this class period, or you may choose to take two full lessons to cover these vital topics. Expect spirited participation.

The worship revolution of recent decades sent scholars digging back into Early Church times to trace the elements of classical worship. What was worship like before the Roman Catholic Church became “corrupt” and the Protestants decided to “disrupt”? Both types of worship—Roman ritual and Protestant revolt—were bound to have extremes. Scholars have about decided that the classical elements of Christian worship that have stood the test of time, include:

One way to process the learning and response to this rather long lecture is to appoint three listening teams. One will “listen” and respond to “Methodist Worship,” another to “Frontier Worship,” and the third to “Pentecostal or Contemporary Worship.” The task of the listening team is to CLARIFY, AMPLIFY, and QUESTION.

Refer students to Resource 15-4.

- Acts of assembly (call to worship, invocation, etc.)
- Singing
- Prayer
- Public reading of the Scripture
- Preaching
- Sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper
- Acts of dismissal (charge to go and serve, benedictions, etc.)

So this is the foundation that lay below the chart which is Resource 15-4. The foundation actually shown on the chart is that which was the norm before the Protestant Reformation. The placement of the Protestant tradition shows the degree of radicalness in terms of departing from the norm. For example, note that in the 16th century the most right wing of the new groups was Lutheran Worship. It was less radical and still the most like Roman Catholic worship among the new groups. Anabaptist worship, on the other hand, was the most radical departure from the norm.

After the flurry of new worship traditions invented within Protestantism during the 16th and 17th centuries, the pace slowed down. For the last 300 years, each century has produced just one new and dominant worship tradition. The new tradition for the 18th century was Methodist. Then came Frontier Worship, and in the 20th century Pentecostal (sometimes called “contemporary”) worship. This was the one “new and dominant” tradition. What will the 21st century produce? Will it feature some things that the Pentecostal tradition abused or neglected?

The Methodist Worship Tradition—18th Century

If time limitations press you, consider leaving out this part of the lecture (“Methodist Worship”). It is foundational to Wesleyan-Holiness practice, so include it if you can.

If you do not have time to include it in your presentation, make a handout of this part of the lecture and distribute it as outside reading. You could of course give it to the class ahead of time, telling students to come to class having already read “Methodist Worship.”

Methodism has been a fertile tradition theologically, liturgically, and ecclesiastically with some 100 churches and denominations claiming Wesleyan or Methodist parentage. Among them the United Methodists, Wesleyan Church, Salvation Army, Free Methodist Church, and the Church of the Nazarene.

Origins of Methodist Worship

Refer students to Resource 15-5.

John Wesley was an Anglican priest to the day he died. He loved that church, the Book of Common Prayer

(BCP), the liturgy, and especially its eucharistic theology. He also like the Puritan edits made on the BCP and his 314-page edition of the BCP for American use included most of their changes. Wesley's Sunday Service provided the core of Methodist liturgy for nearly 200 years.

Methodism was a counterculture movement preaching a religion of the heart in an age drunk on the aloofness of Enlightenment rationality. Methodists, at least Wesley, were not antiintellectual, they insisted on "head and heart" not just the former. The doctrine of assurance was particularly troublesome. Methodists were often accused of "enthusiasm" as they practiced heartfelt worship.

Methodism's mission was to the poor amassing in the cities in industrializing England.

Worship included frequent Communion, written and extemporary prayer, and hymn singing—lots of it. "Charles Wesley poured forth the greatest treasury of hymns in the English language, over six thousand of them."

From White, 153.

"Preaching appealed to the heart and head, energetically delivered as testimony of what Christ could do to transform a wretched life. This was a central part of Wesleyan worship. It was a far cry from the tepid moral rationalism heard from most Anglican . . . pulpits."

From White, 157.

The Christian Conference included Societies, Classes, Bands, Select Societies, Penitent Bands, Mentoring Pairs, Twin Souls (mutual spiritual guidance), Family Religion, the Watch Night service, and the Love Feast. They all had parts to play in Wesleyan worship. These will be explored in another lesson.

Use of laypersons and women in leadership and preaching was one of the "new" elements in Wesleyan practice. Ordained men, however, administered the Lord's Supper.

The Church Year: Methodism observed Christmas, Good Friday, Ascension, Easter, and Trinity Sunday, and the Covenant service for the first Sunday of the year.

19th-Century Developments

Wesley's sacramental piety did not make the voyage safely to America. Wesley's disciple Francis Asbury, commissioned in 1774 at Bristol to take the Methodist message to America, had learned from Wesley the "pragmatic traditionalist." His mentor's pragmatism appealed to him, however, far more than his traditionalism.

One year after Wesley's death the American Methodist leaders quietly cast aside his 314-page prayer book and adopted a 37-page *Sacramental Services, & Etc.* The church year was a nonfactor, frequent Communion was nearly impossible, a largely illiterate people had little use for a service book. Only basic life cycle ceremonies, sparse Eucharist and baptism ceremonies survived.

Developments included:

- Focus on conversion and sanctification of unchurched frontiersmen.
- Simple gospel songs as a way to instruct and evangelize.
- Revivals, camp meetings, and midweek prayer meetings came to replace the class and band meetings.
- Wineglass or tub pulpits gave way to a desk on a platform with the inevitable three chairs (minister, visiting preacher, song leader).
- With the advent of Sunday School, church buildings changed—educational space became as important as worship or revival space.
- Public prayer gave way to the long pastoral prayer, that is to say, it was clericalized.
- Music flourished with the revival fevers—solos, duets, trios, and octets, then choirs came into Methodist fashion.

From White, 163.

20th-Century Methodist Worship

The 19th-century revivalism had filled the Methodist churches that had sprung up in every town and village in America. Worship had become a means to an end, that end was converts. But the frontier was closed, and revivalism would not sustain the movement. Further the Methodists had been blessed with the "redemption and lift" cycle. They were better educated, moving up the social ladder, and building colleges to send their children to. The revival of emotionalism became as empty to them as Anglicanism's pervasive blandness, whose formalism, Wesley said, "the true Christian

could no more feed on than he could fill his belly with the east wind. The epithet fit once more.

Methodists turned to the social gospel, political justice, and aestheticism in worship, music, architecture, art, and a thirst for relevance, ecumenism, and theological liberalism. The failure of these pursuits resulted in a prayerful return to Wesleyan roots, at least in some parts of the Methodist world.

Frontier Worship—19th Century

Refer students to Resource 15-4.

Notice that frontier worship is a full step to the left of Methodist worship and left of center when it comes to classical Christian worship.

Foundations and Development of Frontier Worship

Refer students to Resource 15-6.

Frontier worship was born on the American frontier during the 19th century. It crossed denominational lines and came to dominate American religion. Not even Lutherans and Presbyterians could escape this vital way of taking the gospel to the unreached. At the heart of this movement were the Baptists, Disciples of Christ, Methodists, and the Holiness Movement. It was a form of worship for the unchurched—a need that none of the other traditions had yet addressed.

Though ignored by liturgical scholarship frontier worship has come to dominate Protestantism in many parts of the world. After conquering America, its zealous supporters exported their revivalism to Africa, Asia, Central and South America, and Russia.

From White, 172.

In frontier worship, “two staples are a pragmatic bent to do whatever is needed in worship and to do this uninhibited by canons and service books.”

The tradition of sacramental seasons, three or four times a year, was transported to America and paved the way for the camp meeting as a seasonal religious rite. Camp meetings gave the sacraments a key role. They always ended with the baptism of converts and the last service was almost invariably a Communion service.

The camp meetings and many revivals were genuine ecumenical events with Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and Disciples all participating in the services, including the sacraments. They also brought together whites and blacks. Frontier worship crossed denominational lines, and models of such ecumenism

can be seen. Robert Schuller (Reformed) Jerry Falwell (Baptist), Oral Roberts and Pat Robertson (Pentecostal) show how frontier worship crosses traditional lines.

The focus of worship was conversion of sinners or sanctification of believers. Thus, worship was a means to an end, not an end in itself. Even the pastoral prayer could turn out to be a five-minute course delivered to God on leading a soul to Christ.

Frontier Practices

Sacraments

Baptism—adult believer baptism (except for the Methodists) usually by immersion. Churches were often built near a stream so the converts and congregation would not have far to walk during a Sunday baptismal service. It was an outward sign of an inward grace or condition (except for the Disciples who made it sound as if baptism was regenerative).

The Lord's Supper—was served weekly in Church of Christ, Disciples, and several others. Administered by laymen in Disciple groups and others, it was a memorial for most groups, a remembrance of Christ's past saving acts for others.

Preaching—Evangelistic. It is the main event—the other elements of the service “set up” the sermon. A lively discourse that at least starts with scripture, and includes testimony of the preacher himself, and finally a call to commitment. “Revivalism had always operated in terms of absolutes: saved or damned, converted or unconverted. The gradualism of Christian nurture was foreign to its ethos.”

From White, 180.

Music—Nothing is more fundamental to frontier worship than music. Hymns, gospel songs, choruses, choirs, solos, duets, trios, quartets—participation is important. These serve several functions: warm-up, celebration, preparation for the sermon, and to enhance the invitation. Many songs were individualistic (“Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine”) or evangelistic (“Rescue the Perishing”) or eschatological (“We'll Work Till Jesus Comes”).

Prayer—In the Sunday service, prayer was often dominated by the “pastoral” prayer that covered everything from confession to local political issues. But prayer at the altar was important too, as was groups at prayer, often with several persons praying aloud at the same time. Those who were unsaved or sick were often named and prayed for. The midweek prayer meeting

was one of the engines that fueled the conquest of the frontier. The scope of prayer was broad, but one's personal relationship with God was primary. Some traditions that adopted frontier worship included extemporary prayer and read prayers. Most prayer was impromptu.

From White, 184.

Order of Service—Singing (lots of it), prayer, more singing, announcements and offering, special music, sermon, invitation, and closing hymn. “As a system of church life, revivalism became as polished as the medieval sacramental system.” Sunday night was less formal with an evangelistic emphasis—even if only the sanctified few attended.

Saved to Serve—Frontier converts were put to work in Sunday School, temperance campaigns, prison reform, antislavery drives, home missions, personal evangelism, even women's rights.

Church Year—The Christian calendar was nudged aside except for Christmas and Easter (and some even called these pagan holidays). Into the church bulletins crept New Year's Eve, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Mother's Day (when Mother's Day and Pentecost came so close as to compete, fertility always won), Children's Day, Rally Day, Spring or Fall Revival, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving Day. All Saints' Day gave in to the annual homecoming service with “dinner on the grounds.”

Confirmation was dropped and nothing really replaced it. The Sunday School took over Christian education, but it was mostly an evangelism tool.

Worship Space—Everything from storefront buildings to elaborate and lavish contemporary structures abounded. But whatever the level of affluence, pride, or humility, the building speaks. The pulpit is central and higher than the Communion table. The sacrament of the Word is more important than the Eucharist.

Pentecostal Worship—20th Century

Refer students to Resource 15-7.

The 20th century has given us the most radical worship style in 300 years. It is the farthest left (see Resource 15-4) worship style since the 17th-century Quakers renounced the Bible as the rule of faith and life (the “inner light” was equal to Scripture), and ruled out the sacraments. Pentecostal or contemporary worship places itself on the left fringe by:

- Neglecting the regular public reading of Scripture.
- Reducing the sacraments to mere ordinances.

- Some groups, along with Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, deny the Trinity. Thus, trinitarian creeds (Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed) are ignored.
- Emphasizing almost totally the subjective side of worship, neglecting the objective dimensions.
- Separating preaching from worship. (In a typical Vineyard service, for example, after the escalation of song and prayer to an apex of tongues speaking, worship is over, a fellowship break occurs, and then the "teaching pastor"—not the preacher—gives a sermon.) No other tradition has ever separated proclamation (preaching) from worship.
- Worldwide (66% of Pentecostals live in third world countries) they are the most syncretistic Protestant group.

These questions noted, we must say that the Pentecostal worship style has crossed denominational, class, and racial lines like no other worship movement. Catholics and Protestants alike embrace their brand of heartfelt religion. And no one has taken the message to the grass roots, the poor, the underclass as successfully.

Origins of Pentecostal Worship

In the early hours of the 20th century, at a New Year's Eve service in Topeka, Kansas, a Bethel Bible College student named Agnes N. Ozman received the "gift of tongues" and the Pentecostal movement had sprouted. Agnes declared, "I began to speak in tongues glorifying God, bless HIM! I talked in several languages."

From White, 194.

Her pastor, Charles Parham, had urged the students to seek such a thing and soon he was preaching that this gift was the evidence of the baptism with the Spirit or sanctification. The work spread to many quarters. A pivotal point was the Azusa Street revival led by William J. Seymour, a black preacher.

The Pentecostal flame swept across America. There are more than 300 Pentecostal denominations in America. Further, it crossed denominational lines and charismatics flourished in Catholic, Episcopal, Methodist, and Presbyterian circles. In 1906 Alexander Boddy took the flame to England. By 1966 Sweden had the most Pentecostals per capita of any nation in the world. Methodist pastor-missionary Willis C. Hoover spread the Pentecostal message in Chile after he read of its advances in India in 1906. Brazil has seen fantastic Pentecostal growth. Africa has seen dozens of Pentecostal groups, some syncretistically combining with native religions and apostolic Christianity. The

charismatic movement has proven divisive in some fellowships such as the Southern Baptists, Nazarenes, and Missouri Synod Lutherans and in other places where people resent those who claim to have superior spiritual gifts.

From White, 197.

At first Pentecostalism was a religion of the disinherited. But it has moved upward socially, while still ministering to the lower socioeconomic classes. "People are valued not for themselves but for the gifts they contribute to worship." Gifts such as tongues, interpretation, prophecy, discernment, testimony, and healing are the ones most valued.

Characteristics of Pentecostal Worship

Sacraments—Baptism and the Lord's Supper are practiced as scriptural ordinances, but almost always play a minor part of the worship. If the Holy Spirit is present in a soul-shaking experience of tongues, the symbolic washing of baptism is surely a secondary matter. If the Spirit himself is present healing people on the spot, and inspiring tongues and interpretation and prophecy, the Lord's Supper does not convey a greater presence. The Lord is present—why fumble around with cumbersome ceremonies and ancient symbols to try to invoke the presence that is already gloriously on the scene. Baptism is of the adult believer variety. Some groups also practice foot washing.

Liturgy—The Pentecostals have no set ceremonies, no service books, not even a lectionary. They have no liturgy, they proudly claim. Yet their ceremonies are as predictable as the mass complete with icons. A Pentecostal scholar says, "Pentecostal icons are sight, sound, and movement . . . music becomes an iconic sound . . . music is a constant. It not only accompanies special and congregational singing, it is played during prayer, during the collection of the offering, often punctuates and emphasizes strategic points in the sermon and is an integral part of the altar ministry. [Music is also used to] indicate the transition from one part to the other of the service . . . and everyone in the congregation understands these signals.

From Estrelida Alexander, "Liturgy in Nonliturgical Holiness-Pentecostalism," Wesleyan Theological Society Journal, Fall, 1997, 161-62.

"Kinesthetic [movement] icons are also integral to the Pentecostal worship service. Not to move, not to raise one's hands, clap, sway, shout, or in some visible way to indicate that you are a part of what the congregation is experiencing is considered a sign of lack of spirituality or a sure give away that you are an outsider and might be a candidate for evangelism." Though the church furnishings are sparse, the

gathered people—overflowing auditoriums—form an icon of sight.

Tone and Texture—Millennial hope undergirds Pentecostal worship. Democracy or free participation in songs (critics say they “pray with their eyes open and sing with their eyes shut”), prayers (raising one or both hands), testimonies, and response to the sermon are prized. Spontaneity is a Pentecostal trademark. Songs mark the millennial hope: “He’s Coming Soon,” “When the Saints Go Marching In,” “The Wedding Feast Draws Near.” They appeal better than any other tradition (along with the early frontier model) to the “entry level” members of society. Tongues speaking is the hallmark as the sign of the baptism of the Spirit, testimony to which often brings applause from the audience.

From Tracy and Ingersol, Here We Stand, (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1998), 210.

A typical Pentecostal or contemporary song service follows a predetermined sequence of invitation, engagement, exaltation, and then intimacy. Or if you prefer biblical terms, outside the court, in the pouter court, in the inner court, and then, holy of holies. The last stage of worship often culminates with tongues speaking.

From White, 207.

James White, in *Protestant Worship*, cites these as the identifying marks of contemporary or Pentecostal worship:

- Spontaneity
- Randomness
- Healing of body and mind
- Democratization of worship

Preaching—Sermons are energetic, long, and frequently interrupted by spontaneous remarks from the hearers. Dead silence is not a sign of rapt attention. It is the sign of dead preaching. Like frontier worship, the aim is evangelistic, calling people to conversion, Spirit baptism, or sanctification. One of the unofficial requirements for ordination is that the candidate experience speaking in tongues. In some groups, preaching is now separated from worship proper.

Prayer—Extemporaneous, impromptu, and democratic prayers are preferred over any written prayer.

Healing—Anointing and prayers for healing as part of worship is common.

The Church Year—The liturgical year means nothing to most Pentecostals. Weekly and midweek services, and

small-group meetings mark the calendar. Christmas and Easter are observed. Minor holy days such as Trinity Sunday are elbowed out in favor of Mother's Day, the Fall Revival, or the summer camp meeting.

At the end of this lecture-presentation there will be plenty of questions, challenges, and opinions. Thus we do not prescribe a discussion guide. The principle to follow is that this class is about spiritual formation. Thus, guide the discussion into those areas and do not let the comments range far afield.

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Allow students to respond.

Name one thing to remember about Old Testament worship.

Name two things to remember about New Testament/Early Church worship.

Name three things to remember about Protestant worship.

Looking Ahead

Next lesson we explore two more dimensions of worship—baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Student Guide.

Choose one of the following assignments

The Qualifications of a Worship Leader

Based on Robert Weber, *Worship Leader Magazine* and an article by Wes Tracy *Herald of Holiness* (June 1994, 41), we came up with this "job description" list for a worship leader.

Write a paper of up to three pages (double-spaced) about this job description following these three steps:

- Step 1: Rank these in order of importance according to your best judgment.
- Step 2: Defend and explain your top five rankings.
- Step 3: What is your greatest weakness as a worship leader? Your best strength?

Job description:

- A working knowledge of Old Testament worship
- A working knowledge of New Testament and Early Church worship
- Know something of the development and history of Christian worship
- Have a good reputation as a spiritual person among the members of the congregation
- The ability to lead—that is, to get others to follow him or her
- Know something of the theology of worship

- Know something of the history of the use of music in worship
- Know something of the arts as they relate to worship
- Know something of how worship relates to other ministries such as evangelism, social concern, Christian education, etc.

Plan a Service of Formative Worship

Plan a service of worship for your church or ministry situation, keeping in mind the following:

- The purpose of worship is to glorify God.
- The elements of worship should emphasize the Trinity.
- The essential elements of classical Christian worship.
- The needs of people who will likely be in the congregation.
- The service should be “formative.” That is, it should help people grow spiritually.

Make out the order of service in detail. Include objective and subjective, directive and spontaneous elements. Cite the sermon text and theme.

Journal Prompts

Cite some worship practice that seems to help others but leaves you cold and empty. Prayerfully explore the uses and aim of that worship practice as well as why it doesn't touch you.

Carry on a written conversation with yourself, probing this quotation:

“People argue about worship because they are talking about the most important thing in the universe—how to reach God. No wonder they have strong opinions. But once you understand the nature and history of some worship practice that is different from your own you no longer fear or fight it” (Noble Hansen)

Punctuate the Finish

“All the children of God may unite in love, notwithstanding their differences in opinion or modes of worship.” ... (John Wesley)

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Lesson 16

The Sacramental Means of Grace

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	Baptism: The Sacrament of Initiation	Group Activity	Resource 16-1
0:45	The Lord's Supper: Sacrament of Sanctification	Bible Study/Discussion	Resource 16-2 Resource 16-3 Resource 16-4
1:15	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

Grider, J. Kenneth. *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994, 492-510, 519.

Staples, Rob L. *Outward Sign and Inward Grace*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1989, 85-243.

Taylor, Richard S., ed. *Beacon Dictionary of Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1983, 63-66.

Tracy, Wesley, et al. *Reflecting God*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000, 123-26.

_____. *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000, 33-35.

_____. *Reflecting God Workbook*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000, 86-88.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- define and teach the biblical, historical, and practical aspects of the sacraments of Christian baptism and the Lord's Supper
- own and embrace the sacraments as means of grace for God's people and for themselves
- incorporate the practice of the sacraments in their own spiritual lives
- plan and lead services that feature formative observances of the sacraments of initiation and sanctification

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Paper of choice
Journaling

Assign for next lesson

Put the new knowledge of worship and the sacraments to work right away. This assignment of planning and carrying out a service of renewal of baptismal vows can be handled in several ways:

- *It could be an individual, written assignment.*
- *It could be planned and presented in a local church of which one of your students is a member or the pastor.*
- *The class could plan the service and carry it out in class in extended lesson or a special meeting.*

Planning a Service for Renewal of Baptismal Vows

Prepare a worship service that features the renewal of baptismal vows. Plan the acts of assembly, music, reading of the Scripture, appropriate prayers, an offering, and the sermon title, text, and theme. A ceremony of affirmations and vows is also to be created. See details in the Student Guide.

Journal Prompt

Respond to this as a way of preparing for the next lesson on face-to-face groups: "We are, each of us, angels with only one wing, and we can only fly by embracing each other" (Luciano de Crescenzo).

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Have students share their homework in pairs.

Return and collect homework.

Motivator

From The Preaching Life (Boston: Cowley Publications, 1993), 67.

What Are the Sacraments?

Barbara Brown Taylor says the sacraments show us the ways in which “God is willing to cleanse, strengthen, inspire, empower, bless, forgive, feed, and heal those who come to God in faith.” The sacraments, she claims, reveal a God anxious for us to come home. “Like the prodigal son’s loving father, God is out the door to greet us before we get our strangled speeches out of our mouths, bestowing upon us the very relationship for which we were ready to beg.”

The sacraments are marvelous means of grace to the traveler on the way to the New Jerusalem. The word “sacrament” comes to us endowed with meaning from both Latin and Greek. The Latin word is *sacramentum*, and its history reveals meanings that include the oath of allegiance made by a Roman soldier and the promise made accompanying a formal agreement, sort of like the handshake after a contract is signed. The Greek word is *mysterion* which adds the idea of the “mystery of the Kingdom” Jesus bequeathed to His disciples in Mark 4:11 (NASB). It connotes the truth that the meaning of a sacrament is not fully understood by unbelievers. This mystery cannot be unraveled by human reason alone; faith delivers a sense of the mystery of spiritual things. One of the ways we receive the mystery is through the sacraments.

See Rob L. Staples, Outward Sign and Inward Grace (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1989), 85-87.

From Works, 5:188.

John Wesley defined a sacrament as “an outward sign of inward grace, and a means whereby we receive the same.” Wesley shortened the definition found in the Book of Common Prayer: “An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us; ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.” In contemporary English that definition reads, “A sacrament must be a divinely given action in which

From Staples, Outward Sign, 87-88, 94.

there is a divinely given physical sign that carries with it a divinely given promise of grace to the recipient.”

How many sacraments are there? Catholics celebrate seven (Eucharist, baptism, confirmation, ordination, penance, extreme unction, and marriage). But Protestants have celebrated only two: Baptism, the Sacrament of Initiation, and the Lord’s Supper (Eucharist), the Sacrament of Sanctification.

Protestants have usually set down these three criteria any rite must meet in order to be called a sacrament of the Church.

1. To be a sacrament the rite must have been instituted, participated in, or authorized by Jesus Christ himself.
2. A sacrament must have a physical sign or symbol (water, bread, wine).
3. A sacrament must have a biblical word of promise that requires the response of faith.

Ibid., 92-93.

The sacraments are constitutive elements of the Church. That is, the Church exists where the gospel is preached and the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion are practiced. You may have a wholesome fellowship, a helpful group, but without preaching and sacraments it is something less than the Church.

Orientation

In this lesson we explore the sacraments of initiation and sanctification, Christian baptism and the Lord’s Supper, with an eye for how they sustain the spiritual life of the Body of Christ.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

To help students

- define and teach the biblical, historical, and practical aspects of the sacraments of Christian baptism and the Lord’s Supper
- own and embrace the sacraments as means of grace for God’s people and for themselves
- incorporate the practice of the sacraments in their own spiritual lives
- plan and lead services that feature formative observances of the sacraments of initiation and sanctification

Lesson Body

Guided Discussion: Frequently Asked Questions about Baptism

(35 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 16-1.

In this exercise the content is arranged in a question and answer-format. Pose the question, ask for response, and give the answer based on—but not limited to—the answer items.

From Works, 10: 188.

Depending on the needs of the class and the time available, you can give this Bible study expanded or expedited treatment.

Question: *Why is baptism called the sacrament of initiation?*

Answer: Because it comes at or near the beginning of the believer's new life in Christ. In the Book of Acts baptism followed very closely upon the affirmation of faith in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of the world. The new converts on the Day of Pentecost were baptized straightaway (Acts 2). The Ethiopian led to faith by Philip was baptized the same day (Acts 8). In later years the study and discipline of preparation for baptism took some time, but still baptism was what officially made them a new member of the Church. John Wesley called baptism "the initiatory sacrament that enters us into covenant with God."

Question: *What does the New Testament say about baptism?*

Answer: Check out the references:

- Matthew 3: 1-6, John the Baptist
- Matthew 3: 13-17, Baptism of Jesus
- Matthew 28: 18-20, Great Commission includes baptism
- Acts 2: 38, Pentecost converts baptized
- Acts 8: 12-13, 36-38, Philip baptizing
- Acts 9: 18, Baptism of Paul
- Romans 6: 1-4, Baptized unto death, into life
- Galatians 3: 26-29, Putting on Christ in baptism
- Colossians 2: 11-13, Buried and raised in baptism

Question: *What does the Church of the Nazarene say about baptism?*

Answer: The 12th Article of Faith in the *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene reads:

We believe that Christian baptism, commanded by our Lord, is a sacrament signifying acceptance of the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ, to be administered to believers and declarative of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and full purpose of obedience in holiness and righteousness.

Baptism being a symbol of the new covenant, young children may be baptized, upon request of parents or guardians who shall give assurance for them of necessary Christian training.

Baptism may be administered by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, according to the choice of the applicant.

In Outward Sign, Staples uses nearly 40 pages to “unpack” these theological affirmations. Read pages 122-60.

Question: *What theological affirmations are made about Christian baptism?*

Answer: Nazarene theologian Rob L. Staples summarizes the typical Protestant theology of baptism in these words:

1. It is the mark of our inclusion in the new covenant that Christ established.
2. It is the symbol of our identification with the death of Christ.
3. It is the symbol of our participation in the resurrected life of Christ.
4. It is the symbol of our reception of the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of Christ.
5. It is the action through which we are made part of Christ's Body, the Church.

Question: *Does getting baptized save you?*

Answer: Though some groups seem to teach that the act of baptism automatically saves, the answer is no. Baptism and regeneration are not the same thing. Mere performance of the rite cannot save one. Repentance, confession, and faith give access to the atonement of Christ. Jesus our Lord is the Savior. No ritual, however holy, is a savior. Baptism in the Book of Acts is more like the “conclusion or climax of conversion itself.” Baptism is the outward testimony of an inward change of heart and life. Coming forward for baptism tells everyone you have crucified the old sinful life and now walk in newness of life with the Lord.

From Staples, Outward Sign, 144.

Question: *How seriously did the Early Church take baptism?*

Answer: Though the converts in Acts were baptized immediately upon conversion, the practice of the Church soon changed. Nearly all the Acts converts had an understanding of the Hebrew religion and the Old Testament. This gave them a foundation that made prompt baptism appropriate. But as the Church moved out all over the known world, their converts were steeped in paganism. Thus preparation for baptism—

officially becoming part of the Church—became appropriate.

For our spiritual ancestors in the young, Christian movement, baptism marked a radical change. It was a public testimony that they were forsaking a sin-soaked culture and were embracing the way of purity, holiness, and love modeled by Jesus.

To be baptized was no flippant decision. Though you had become a born-again believer, you still had to live a holy lifestyle for a long time before you were baptized. In church you had to sit with the non-baptized section. You had to leave before the Lord's Supper was served to the baptized. Preparation for baptism included a course of spiritual formation and instruction that went on for up to three years. The candidate had to complete three grades, moving from hearer, to kneeler, to chosen.

Question: *What do we know of the actual baptism ceremony in the Early Church?*

Answer: When the moment for baptism finally came, a solemn ceremony took place. A period of fasting by the candidate and the ones sponsoring him or her preceded the ceremony. You were baptized (triple immersion or pouring), in the name of the "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Then a triple affirmation of faith was made, which eventually took the form of the Apostles' Creed. One took a solemn vow to renounce the world, the evil desires of the flesh, and the devil. A vow to obey the commandments of the Lord followed.

See Shepherd of Hermas, and the Didache.

The newly baptized were then anointed with consecrated oil as a sign of the gift of the Holy Spirit. A white robe was given to the candidates and the sign of the cross was made on each believer's forehead. Then a crown of leaves was placed upon the new Christian's head. A time of prayer followed. Then the newly baptized were led to a meal of milk and honey and consecrated bread and water. Sometimes this meal was followed by a sermon and Holy Communion. After this the new church members began a post-baptismal course of instruction to help them with their daily walk.

To sin against those solemn baptismal vows was very serious. In some eras and locations the backslider was forbidden to return to church, for he or she had "crucified the Son of God afresh." In other times and areas the backslider had to sit in the "mourners" or "penitents" section of the church for a year, maybe for life.

For our early ecclesiastical ancestors baptism was “believer baptism,” that is, baptism of born-again, instructed, and tested believers.

Question: *What about infant baptism and baby dedication?*

Answer: Infant baptism became popular when Christianity conquered the Roman empire. Then it was decided that everyone, including newborns, needed the special grace of Christian baptism. About AD 320, Emperor Constantine made it legal to be a Christian. By AD 381 Emperor Theodosius made it illegal to be anything other than Christian. The belief became popular that infant baptism delivered both the new birth (regeneration) and the “infusing” of the Holy Spirit to the new baby. Some believed this assured heaven for the child no matter how he or she later lived. What a sure method of evangelism! Others taught that the benefits of the atonement delivered by infant baptism could be sinned away—and usually was. John Wesley, true to his Anglican doctrine, so believed.

From Manual, 2005-2009, par. 800.2.

Some Wesleyan-Holiness theologians still teach that “special graces are infused”—even regeneration and the bestowal of the Spirit—at infant baptism. The general belief among Holiness folks, however, stops short of such claims. The first Nazarene ceremony for infant baptism begins with, “While we do not hold that baptism imparts the regenerating grace of God . . .” Probably, the majority of Wesleyan-Holiness people prefer believer baptism. That is, baptism at the time of a personal confession of faith.

There is biblical precedent for both infant baptism and dedication. When, as recorded in Acts, whole households were baptized, surely some children were included. The Old Testament gives accounts of dedicating a child (Hannah and Samuel, for instance). It is the position of the Church of the Nazarene that either of these rites is acceptable and both are valuable.

Question: *Should a person ever be rebaptized?*

Answer: No. Though some who were baptized as infants, or those who have left one church for what they see as a better one, often feel as if they want to be rebaptized, it should not be done. Baptism is a divine act, and to do it over is to charge God with incompetence or negligence. Some call rebaptism a blasphemy. Many of us would, on the other hand, welcome a service for the renewal of baptismal vows.

Question: *Where can I find ceremonies and rituals for baptismal services?*

Also, see Jesse C. Middendorf, The Church Rituals Handbook (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1997), 930.

Answer: The *Manual* of the Church of the Nazarene has rituals for baptism and dedication: paragraphs 800.1—800.4.

The Lord's Supper: Sacrament of Sanctification

(30 minutes)

A Bible Study on the Lord's Supper

Spend the next 12 minutes completing Resource 16-2.

Refer to Resource 16-2.

Study Luke 22:7-23 and 1 Corinthians 10:14-22 and 11:17-33. Use this study guide to organize and interpret what you read.

What verse(s) indicate that:

- a. Jesus himself started this tradition?
- b. We are commanded to keep this sacrament in memory of Jesus?
- c. The Lord's Supper points to the Second Coming?
- d. There is danger of betrayal even at the table of the Lord?
- e. We should examine our hearts before taking Communion?
- f. The privilege of the Lord's Supper can be abused and cheapened?
- g. Holy Communion commemorates and renews the "new covenant" in Jesus' blood?
- h. Prayers of thanksgiving should be a part of Communion?
- i. Holy Communion is the Christian's Passover?
- j. All Christians are one body?
- k. The Communion cup is a cup of blessing that we bless?
- l. The bread and wine stand for the body and blood of Christ Jesus?

The Significance and Meaning of Holy Communion

Affirmations

Refer students to Resource 16-3.

Because the Lord's Supper carries so much significance, we must examine our motivations, our very selves, in preparation. When you take Holy Communion you make important affirmations.

1. You publicly identify yourself with Christ and His people.

2. You affirm your faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
3. You demonstrate your belief in salvation by grace, for no one is worthy to kneel at the Lord's table on his or her own merits.
4. You repent of any known sins, for one cannot bring unconfessed sins to the table of the Lord.
5. You seek purification, holiness, sanctification.
6. Your action says you are ready to encounter God in soul-shaking dimensions.
7. You memorialize or commemorate the suffering of Jesus Christ on your behalf.
8. You reenact the sacrifice of Christ and commit yourself to share in His sufferings on behalf of the lost for whom He died.
9. You renew the covenant with Christ.
10. You declare your hope in the return of Jesus Christ.
11. You assert your faith in the resurrection of Jesus and in your own resurrection (Rom 8: 11).
12. You express your commitment to the unity of the church, and your willingness to reach out in love and forbearance to the family of faith.
13. You are nourished by the Bread of Life and the Blood of the Lamb.
14. You give thanks to God.
15. You acknowledge the true presence of the historical Christ.
16. You participate in a celebration of joy and Christ's victory.

Consider each of the affirmations. Then, following the directions in part 2 of this exercise, match affirmations with the quotations that support, clarify, or amplify them.

Thoughts on the Eucharist

Consider the quotations about the Lord's Supper given below. Write the number (or numbers) of the affirmation(s) above each quote reinforces, amplifies, or clarifies.

- ___a. "In the Supper our Lord is present. The Christ of Calvary, risen and ascended, sits with us in the Supper" (J. Kenneth Grider, *A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*, 519).
- ___b. "Of thy sacramental feast this day, O Son of God, accept me as a partaker. . . . I will not give thee a kiss like Judas" (*The Liturgy of St. Basil*).
- ___c. "The question is not, 'Am I good enough to take communion?' Rather it is, 'Am I willing to give my whole life in self-oblivious sacrifice in the name of Jesus?'" (Evelyn Underhill, *The Mystery of Sacrifice*, [Harrisburg, PA, Morehouse Pub., 1991], 51).
- ___d. "As our bodies are strengthened by bread and wine, so are our souls by these tokens of the body and the blood of Christ. . . . This gives

Refer students to Resource 16-4 and use with Resource 16-3.

This can be done as individuals or as a guided discussion with the whole class or in Base Groups.

- strength to perform our duty, and leads us on to perfection” (John Wesley, *Works*, 7:148).
- ___e. “As this piece [of bread] was scattered over the hills and then brought together and made one, so let your Church be brought together from the ends of the earth into your Kingdom” (*The Didache*).
 - ___f. The Lord’s Supper is “the sacrament of memory” (William Barclay).
 - ___g. “The Church is the Body of Christ, the organ of His eternal self-offering . . . each of her members accepts a sacrificial status, is willing to give all for the world’s need.” In the Lord’s Supper, the believer “is stretching out the arms upon the cross . . . that they may embrace the whole world” (Underhill, 29, 34).
 - ___h. “Our minds leap forward, too, in the Supper. We are to rehope at this time for the second coming of Christ to finalize our redemption” (Grider, 510).
 - ___i. In the Eucharist it may be that “the soul is led into the very recesses of the Godhead, and by love made visible is snatched up to the Invisible Love” (Underhill, 5).
 - ___j. “Consume the thorns of my offenses. Make clean my soul, make holy my mind” (*The Greek Heiratikon*, quoted in Underhill, 74).
 - ___k. “It approaches the ridiculous to exclude fellow believers from Communion. . . . It is unfortunate, if not ridiculous, in a local church setting, when a visiting Christian is prohibited from receiving Communion!” (Grider, 508).
 - ___l. “This meal need not be special, or exhilaratingly meaningful (though sometimes it is both). This is the normal food of Christians. . . . We return again and again to the Lord’s table . . . as habitually . . . as we gather at the breakfast table” (William Willimon, *The Service of God* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983], 127).
 - ___m. “The Eucharist was not a solemn, mournful occasion, but a festive one . . . [with] the presence of Christ as the host of a present celebration” (Rob Staples, *Outward Sign and Inward Grace*, 229, 245).
 - ___n. “In my hand no price I bring; / Simply to thy cross I cling” (Augustus Toplady).

Lesson Close

(15 minutes)

Review

Review the content of today's lesson by having the Articles of Faith on Baptism (XII) and The Lord's Supper (XIII) read aloud from the *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene* (pars. 16 and 17).

Look Ahead

Our study of the "community disciplines" continues next time with a study of face-to-face groups. Wesley's classes and bands will serve as models from which to develop ideas about face-to-face groups today.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Student Guide.

Put the new knowledge of worship and the sacraments to work right away. This assignment of planning and carrying out a service of renewal of baptismal vows can be handled in several ways:

- *It could be an individual written assignment.*
- *It could be planned and presented in a local church of which one of your students is a member or the pastor.*

The class could plan the service and carry it out in class in extended lesson or a special meeting.

For more information on planning a Baptismal Vows Renewal Service see the Reflecting God Leader's Guide, 34-35.

Plan a Service for Renewing of Baptismal Vows

Prepare a worship service that features the renewal of baptismal vows. Plan the acts of assembly, the music, public reading of the Scripture, appropriate prayers, an offering, and the sermon title, text, and theme. A ceremony of affirmations and vows is also to be created. Include any items from this lesson's lecture you desire (white robes, anointing with oil, meal of milk and honey, crowns of leaves, Communion service).

See the Student Guide for the complete Renewal Ceremony.

Journal Prompt

Respond to this as a way of preparing for the next lesson: "We are, each of us, angels with only one wing, and we can only fly by embracing each other" (Luciano de Crescenzo).

Punctuate the Finish

Consider the words of Jesus: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Mt 4: 10, KJV).

Lesson 17

Companions on the Spiritual Journey

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide
0:10	An Introduction to John Wesley's Face-to-Face Groups	Lecture, Small-Group Discussion	Resource 17-1 Resource 17-2 Resource 17-3
0:55	The Family at Worship: A Face-to-Face Group	Small-Group Activity	Resource 17-4
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

Wesley Tracy, et al., *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 133-62, 193-200.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), 127-134.

Wesley D. Tracy, "John Wesley, Spiritual Director," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* Vol. 23, Spring-Fall, 1988, 148-62.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- understand the insightful and practical use of face-to-face groups in the Wesleyan tradition
- own their own need for the encouragement, strengthening, accountability, and growth that comes from face-to-face Christian groups
- experience the small-group process and devise ministry strategies employing face-to-face groups as one necessary way the community of faith nurtures the deeper spiritual life

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Service plan
Journaling

To be assigned for next lesson

Face-to-face groups: Next class time each student is to submit a two- to three-page typewritten plan to start a face-to-face group ministry involving three or more persons. It can focus on instruction and fellowship (like the Class Meeting) on covenant groups (like the Band Meeting) or a support group, a leadership group, or a program of family worship. The "plan" should include the specific plans for the first meeting of the group.

Journal Prompts

- One thing that scares me about face-to-face groups is . . .
- Two persons I would like to work with in a small group are . . .
- Three things I could get out of an ongoing face-to-face group are . . .

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Discuss the student's response to the Renewal Service—emotions, attitude, etc.

Return and collect homework.

Motivator

Did you ever wonder why wild geese fly in Vs? One scientist did and he got a U.S. government grant to study the matter. He discovered that geese could fly 71 percent farther and longer by flying in Vs. It seems that as the geese position themselves in the V formation the motion of the wings of the goose in front of each one provides an uplift that makes it easier for the following goose to fly. Seventy-one percent farther and longer by flying together.

Occasionally, an independent goose strikes out on his own, but it soon gives out and has to stop or get hopelessly behind and maybe risk the buckshot of goose hunters hiding in the reeds.

Christians are like that too. On our own we soon grow faint, give in to temptation, or get too discouraged to go on. We really do need each other.

Now I know the next question: "What happens to the lead goose? He has no bird to provide the uplift for him." The answer is simple and practical. When the lead goose gets tired, it falls out and takes its place at the end of the formation where it is easier to fly. Another goose moves up and leads. A good example for Christian leaders.

Orientation

Remember your journal prompt from the previous lesson? "We are, each of us, angels with only one wing and we can only fly by embracing each other." In today's lesson we explore the nature and usefulness of face-to-face groups in Christian nurture. We will look at our unusually rich Wesleyan heritage of small-group ministries and try to evaluate how this heritage can enrich our ministry today.

Learner Objectives

Direct students to the Student Guide.

To help students

- understand the insightful and practical use of face-to-face groups in the Wesleyan tradition
- own their own need for the encouragement, strengthening, accountability, and growth that comes from face-to-face Christian groups
- experience the small-group process and devise ministry strategies employing face-to-face groups as one necessary way the community of faith nurtures the deeper spiritual life

Lesson Body

An Introduction to John Wesley's Face-to-Face Groups

(45 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 17-1.

Display Resource 17-1 as you present this brief history of small-group ministry in the Wesleyan tradition.

Another way to use this is to make the lecture into a handout and ask Base Groups to read and discuss certain parts (i.e., classes, bands, select society) and use the discussion guide for their exploration of the topic. Then call on each group to report on one or two of the Wesleyan face-to-face groups.

No one has yet improved on John Wesley's plan for pastoral care. Its bountiful success in caring for converts, building up believers, and leading Christians into the experience of sanctification demands our attention. Most of the believers who found entire sanctification in Wesley's time did so in a small-group meeting.

The spiritual guidance that he taught and structured was called Christian Conference. Therein, people experienced mutual spiritual guidance in classes, bands, societies, families, in "twin soul" and faith mentoring pairs.

The Society

The society in the Methodist Connexion was at first a religious organization within the Church of England. Societies held no meetings or services that would conflict with the Anglican worship schedule. Eventually the society became a sort of local congregation meeting in chapels, halls, and homes. The society had four meetings. On Sunday evenings a service of preaching, Scripture reading, exhortations, testimonies, and hymn-sing was held. The society also had a 5 AM meeting on a weekday morning. The workday started at 6 AM and the Methodists went to the factories and the mines armed with a fresh religious experience. The society also held a joyous watch night service monthly on Saturday night. It came at the full moon so the members would have moonlight by which to walk home. The other meeting was the Love Feast, a service that began with a meal of bread and water, proceeded with opportunities to mend relationships, and ended with testimonies and praise.

The Class Meeting

The Class Meeting has been hailed as Wesley's greatest contribution. D. L. Moody called it the greatest tool for discipling converts ever devised.

From David Michael Henderson, "John Wesley's Instructional Groups," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1980, 140.

From Wesley Tracy, "John Wesley: Architect of Christian Nurture," Herald of Holiness, Feb. 1991, 27.

The society was subdivided into classes of about 12 persons each. Every member of the society was required to join a class that met weekly. The class meeting was a more or less democratic forum where rich and poor, old and young, the educated and the illiterate could meet as peers. At first, "class meetings met in homes, shops, school rooms, attics—even coal bins—wherever there was room for ten or twelve people to assemble." The leadership of classes was open to both genders. "The class meeting was the only significant role of leadership for women in Britain."

David Michael Henderson calls the class meeting an instructional group. It was that indeed. Methodist doctrines and practices, along with the Sunday sermons were explained, but the class was also an arena of koinonia. Acceptance, love, and mutual commitment were the keynotes. After an opening hymn, the typical meeting would then see the class leader share the problems and victories in his or her spiritual life. Class members would then, on a voluntary basis, follow suit. Answers to prayer, spiritual lessons learned from experience as well as temptations, griefs, backslidings, and the like were shared. In this context of prayer, trust, and confession spiritual growth was accelerated.

Wesley summarized the function of the classes in the *Arminian Magazine*:

The particular design of the classes is, to know who continue as members of the society; to inspect their outward walking; to inquire into their inward state; to learn what are their trials; and how they fall by or conquer them; to instruct the ignorant in the principles of religion; to repeat, to explain, or enforce . . . what has been said in public preaching. [To insure that] they have a clear, full, abiding conviction, that without inward, complete, universal holiness, no man shall see the Lord.

From Zion's Herald, Boston, November 30, 1825. Designated as a reprint from the Arminian Magazine.

When the Wesleyan revival jumped the Atlantic and came to America, first, the rampant revivalism and second, the success of the Sunday School shoved the class meeting into the background. Today, what's left of the heritage of the class meeting is expressed in adult Sunday School classes, in small-group Bible studies, and in membership classes.

The Bands

The bands were same-gender groups of five or six persons committed to each other and to the holy life.

They met to help each other on the road to Christian perfection. These were “deeper life” groups and only about one-third of the typical society joined, or was invited to join the bands where they shared their spiritual journeys “without reserve and without disguise.” John Wesley called this “close conversation.” He felt that Methodism was closest to the New Testament ideal in the band meetings. He said he saw one man who learned more about the spiritual life in one band meeting than he had in 10 years of listening to public preaching.

Before one could join a band, he or she was examined by 11 questions. Five of them were:

1. Have you the forgiveness of sins and peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ?
2. Have you the witness of God’s Spirit with your spirit that you are a child of God?
3. Has no sin, inward or outward, dominion over you?
4. Do you desire to be told all your faults?
5. Is it your desire and design to be, on this and on all other occasions, entirely open so as to speak everything that is in your heart without exception, without disguise, and without reserve?

From Wesley, Works, 8:272.

Wesley wrote five starter questions to be used in each band meeting. Wesley’s wording of the questions was:

1. What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?
2. What temptations have you met with?
3. How were you delivered?
4. What have you thought, said or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?
5. Have you nothing you desire to keep secret? (Question five is not always included in the early Wesleyan accounts of the bands.)

You may want to let your Base Groups use the Band Meeting Questions in an in-class exercise. If you prefer, you could substitute it for the “Family Worship” exercise.

However, you could also assign the Band Meeting exercise to Base Groups for a beyond the classroom meeting.

See Works, 8:273.

Following are the band questions stated in contemporary style more attuned to the spiritual ear of serious Christians today:

1. What spiritual failures have you experienced since our last meeting? What known sins, if any, have you committed?
2. What temptations have you battled with this week? Where do you feel the most vulnerable right now?
3. What temptations have you been delivered from this week? Please share with us how you won the victory.

Refer students to Resource 17-2.

See *Reflecting God*, 133.

4. Has the Lord revealed anything to you about your heart and life that makes you want us to join you in taking a second look at what might be sinful attitudes, lifestyle, or motivations?
5. Is there any spiritual problem that you have never been able to talk about—to us or even to God?

What Christian could not profit from meeting weekly with trusted friends to share answers to such questions? Too often we simply go to church and look at the back heads of our fellow believers' heads during a public service and never see into each other's hearts.

The revival and camp meeting emphasis in America diminished the Band Meeting in the 19th century and early 20th century. And with the Sunday School then charged with almost all the Christian nurture duties, the ministry of the bands faded. The genius of the band was, however, rediscovered when covenant groups surged through the religious and secular culture in the last three decades of the 20th century. The Wesleyan and Wesleyan-Holiness groups should have owned the franchise on covenant group work, but they had all but discarded the band ethos in favor of revivalism and Sunday School work, and the lust to be like the supersuccessful Southern Baptists. The "baptistification" of the Holiness Movement contributed to the loss of the class and band meeting heritage. The Holiness churches had to relearn the covenant and support group ethos by borrowing from the culture and digging into their all but forgotten heritage. Today covenant groups blossom like wisteria on the sunny side of the barn all over the Wesleyan-Holiness Movement.

The Penitent Bands

This "backslider's band" was designed especially for sincere people who, for some reason, kept being recaptured by some besetting sin. They wanted to do right but had not found the strength and discipline to completely forsake their sins and stay on the path to perfection. For them: the penitent band met on Saturday nights. What would happen to the spiritual temperature of our churches if those with persistent spiritual problems and failures could, without disgrace or losing face, go to a regular meeting for people just like them? What a celebration when someone would graduate from the penitent band!

The Select Society

The select society was a small group for leaders in the Methodist Connexion. Only the most faithful and dedicated were invited. The Select Society had no rules, and no order of service. It had no official leader. Even if John Wesley himself was present, he did not preside. Any topic or concern of the leadership team could be discussed. Wesley's first experiment with this structure aimed at helping them advance in perfection, to help them love each other more, to improve every leadership talent, and also "to have a select company, to whom I might unbosom myself on all occasions, without reserve; and whom I could propose to all their brethren as a pattern of love, of holiness, and of good works."

From Wesley, Works, 8:261.

Although there were no rules there were three "directions."

- Everything discussed was to be held in confidence.
- In "indifferent" matters or opinions regarding "non-essentials" members were to abide by the arbitration of the "senior" minister among them.
- Everyone should give to the common stock of offerings of money and goods for the poor.

This was in harmony with the directive for all Wesleyan small-groups meetings—each group was to give an offering for the poor, every meeting, no exceptions.

As an example, the leadership writings of John Maxwell, a minister in the Wesleyan Church, who recently had two books in the top ten of the New York Times bestseller list, does not refer, to my knowledge, to Wesley's select society and its "leaderless" leadership theory.

Today the random church staff meetings, and church board retreats, and the like do not draw on the select society heritage in any direct way. Many contemporary church leadership training programs apply leadership principles from the secular business literature rather than from Wesley's experiences with the select society and its "leaderless" leadership theory.

Small-Group Discussion

In your Base Groups or in other discussion groups consider the following discussion starters:

Refer students to Resource 17-3 to guide the discussion.

1. What face-to-face group experience that you have experienced in the past year mirrors one of the early Wesleyan groups?
2. What groups in our church or ministry setting (if any) mirror the early Wesleyan groups? Which ones?
3. New converts today need what kind of face-to-face group?
4. When it comes to nurture through community, what our church does best is . . .

5. The sense of belonging at my church would be improved if I, for one, would . . .
6. If I were to join or start a modern version of a Wesleyan face-to-face group, it would be . . .
7. If you were to start a covenant group something like Wesley's bands, around what would you organize it in your church or ministry setting right now?
 - Bible study
 - Pursuit of holiness
 - Cancer survivors' group
 - Church leadership
 - Prayer group
 - Spiritual fellowship
 - Divorce recovery
 - Doctrinal study
 - Other
8. If you were to organize a group that you selected in "7" above, what would the appropriate first steps be? (permissions, ownership, calendaring, curriculum, group leader, etc.?).

The Family at Worship: A Face-to-Face Group

(25 minutes)

Refer to Resource 17-4.

Those who write about Wesley's face-to-face groups almost always forget one of the most important groups—the family. Family worship and study was recommended twice daily, morning and evening. It was one of the engines that fueled the Methodist revival. The emphasis on this was great, not slight. Besides the twice-daily family worship, Thursday night was to be given to one-on-one parent to child instruction. On Saturday night the family was to review all that they had learned during the week. To help with the family worship and religious education Wesley provided *A Collection of Prayers for Families, Prayers and Devotions for Every Day of the Week, Prayers for Children, Lessons for Children (200 Bible studies), and Instructions for Children (58 lessons on Christian living)*.

Point out how educationally insightful steps 3 and 7 are.

To help parents who had little if any experience with such things, Wesley devised an insightful method of family worship:

Step 1: A short extemporaneous or read prayer.

Step 2: Psalm singing.

Step 3: Bible study. A parent was to read the Scripture for the day and explain it. Then the children were to explain the Bible passage back to the parents.

Step 4: Family Prayer using both written and spontaneous prayers.

Step 5: Singing of the Doxology.

Step 6: The benediction given by a parent.

Step 7: The blessing. The parent lays his or her hand on the head of each child and blesses the child in Jesus' name.

The blessing in Jesus' name, Wesley charged, was never to be omitted no matter how bad the child had behaved that day. Being blessed in Jesus' name by a parent every day—even on days when your conduct was rotten! Think what that would do for a child's self-esteem, for their spiritual health. Would not that put you light-years ahead of all the advice of Dr. Spock!

Using Resource 17-4 divide your class into groups of four (or use existing Base Groups). Let two students serve as the children. Follow instructions on Resource 17-4 and let the students participate in this form of face-to-face small-group experience

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Face-to-face groups offer us companions on our spiritual journey. They form an important part of the Church, which is a community of faith. Developing the skills and disciplines of face-to-face discipleship is important.

Some of the values they bring are accountability, encouragement, fellowship, and a sense of belonging. Too many Christians have no one to talk to about their deepest spiritual battles and needs.

Though we need not woodenly repeat John Wesley's precise structures, all of us one-winged angels must embrace each other so we can fly.

Looking Ahead

Next time we explore the role of one-on-one spiritual guidance as a means of grace. Serving as spiritual friends and faith mentors is one way we practice the priesthood of all believers. We serve as "God's ushers" to each other. Again, we will look at the Wesleyan model of spiritual friends and faith mentors. Then we will see what soul friends and faith mentors look like today.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Student Guide.

Face-to-Face Groups

Next class time each student is to submit a two- to three-page typewritten plan to start a face-to-face group ministry involving three or more persons. It can focus on instruction and fellowship (like the Class Meeting) on covenant groups (like the Band Meeting) or a support group, a leadership group, or a program of family worship. The "plan" should include the specific plans for the first meeting of the group.

Journal Prompts

- One thing that scares me about face-to-face groups is . . .
- Two persons I would like to work with in a small group are . . .
- Three things I could get out of an on going face-to-face group are . . .

Punctuate the Finish

“It is a blessed thing to have fellow travelers on the road to the new Jerusalem. If you do not find any, you must make them for none can travel this road alone”
(John Wesley, *Letters*, 8:158)

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Lesson 18

Faith Mentors and Soul Friends

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Orient	Student Guide Resource 18-1
0:10	All About Faith Mentors	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 18-2 Resource 18-3
0:50	Twin Souls and Spiritual Friends	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 18-4 Resource 18-5
1:20	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

Laurent Daloz, *Effective Teaching and Mentoring* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987), 200-245.

Ron Lee Davis, *Mentoring: The Strategy of the Master* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 11-224.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 135-191.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), 127-34.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- understand the roles and function of faith mentors and soul friends, relating them to Scripture and the Wesleyan heritage
- review with appreciation the times that faith mentors and spiritual friends have helped them, and look at their own life situation with a discerning eye for mentoring and “twin soul” ministry opportunities
- purposely thank their own mentors, and establish mentoring or soul friend relationships in their own lives

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Face-to-face group plan

Journaling

To be assigned for next lesson

Letter to a Mentor

Think of someone who served you as a mentor—spiritual, vocational, or personal—and write a letter of thanks, even if you have “outgrown” that person and his or her ideas now.

Conversation Report

Before the next class set up informal conversations with at least two different people about faith mentors and soul friends. Record the responses, feelings, insights that came up. Did the conversations take any surprising turns? What never came up that you expected to discuss? Write a one- to three-page typewritten report.

Journal Prompt

Write a prayer dialogue between you and the Lord about this matter of faith mentoring and twin souls ministry.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on two students to share their face-to-face plan with the class.

Return and collect homework.

Motivator

“God’s Usher.” That is the ministry of faith mentors and spiritual friends. They usher the one they serve into the presence of God. They usher their friends down the paths of righteousness, truth, and peace where epiphany can happen. Nothing could be more Protestant. It is part of the Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. We are talking about a ministry of mediation in which faith mentors and “twin souls” mediate grace, the love of God, discernment, self-knowledge, and a sense of vocation or calling.

This is not like preaching to 1,000 people, nor is it like teaching a class of 20. This is one-on-one ministry. If the Christian faith is to prosper in the post-Christian age, it will require spending more time with fewer people. Mass appeals will still have their place, but since the culture cannot be counted on to value, let alone teach Christian values, the task must be done one person at a time. The coaching and nourishing and teaching must be done more thoroughly than ever. That means small groups and one-to-one ministry. More time with fewer people!

Orientation

In this lesson we look at two more Wesleyan spiritual disciplines of community. Having already considered worship, sacraments, family religion, and face-to-face groups, we now examine soul friend, and mentoring pairs—one-on-one relationships.

Refer students to Resource 18-1.

Faith mentoring is the ministry of an experienced, mature, established Christian to a new convert, a young Christian, or even a not-yet-saved person. It is the spiritual equivalent of a journeyman-apprentice relationship. John Wesley called them “spiritual fathers” and “nursing mothers.”

Twin souls is the term Wesley used to describe two mature spiritual friends who meet with each other regularly as equals giving to each other support, accountability, discerning insight, concerned counsel, and love as they serve as God's usher to one another. Perhaps this is the most neglected ministry among Wesleyan-Holiness people today. The mature Christian is always called to serve, serve, and serve some more, but who serves, who ministers to the experienced Christian? Too often they are left alone to fend for themselves. Such faithful believers need a soul friend with whom they can share the spiritual life "without reserve and without disguise."

Learner Objectives

Direct students to the Student Guide.

To help students

- understand the roles and function of faith mentors and soul friends, relating them to Scripture and the Wesleyan heritage
- review with appreciation the times that faith mentors and spiritual friends have helped you, and look at your own life situation with a discerning eye for mentoring and "twin soul" ministry opportunities
- purposely thank your own mentors, and establish mentoring or soul friend relationships

Lesson Body

All About Faith Mentors

(40 minutes)

Bible study: You may wish to make quote posters of these verses from 1 Thess 2 and mount them in the classroom to set the tone, referring to them from time to time through your presentation on faith mentoring and twin souls.

Or you may use 1 Thess 2 as a small-group Bible study, asking the students to list and discuss the aspects of faith mentoring and twin souls ministry that they find described or indicated in the Bible passage.

Still another plan would be to assign each of its four parts to a Base Group. Each group would study one of the four exercises and report on it. Each student then will have studied one exercise in depth and hear reports on the other three.

Bible Study: Paul as Faith Mentor for the Thessalonians

“So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become so dear to us” (1 Thess 2:8, NRSV).

“We were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children” (1 Thess 2:7, NRSV).

“We dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, urging and encouraging you and pleading that you live a life worthy of God, who calls you” (1 Thess 2:11-12, NRSV).

“For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? Yes, you are our glory and joy!” (1 Thess 2:19-20, NRSV).

Faith Mentoring Today

There are many modes of faith mentoring, but here’s a true story about one picture of faith mentoring today.

“Under the Eucalyptus Tree”

We sat under a giant eucalyptus tree enjoying one of those glorious June afternoons in Marin County, California. My new friend and I spoke of things theological, philosophical, and political. He looked at his watch.

“Oh, I’ve got to be going,” he said. “I’ve got a mentoring meeting in less than an hour.”

“A what?” I asked.

A mentoring meeting. Our church has this mentoring program. About 30 professional men and women in our church make themselves available to high school

juniors and seniors. If a teen is interested in law, medicine, dentistry, ministry, teaching, or banking—whatever—they can sign up with one of us.

“Sign up?” I asked.

“Yes, for a year we mentor the youngster in our profession. He or she accompanies us through our work—getting an inside look at law, medicine, or professing, that’s me,” he replied.

“Is it strictly business?” I queried.

“Oh, no. We spend social time together as well. And the kids usually have some real basic questions about the Christian faith too.”

“You feel like it’s a good investment, I take it,” I said.

“Let’s put it this way. At least 25 young people from our church have gone into the profession of their local church mentor. That’s 25 Christian professionals that our church has put on the map, so to speak.”

Kind of dumbstruck, I muttered, “How utterly Wesleyan.”

“No,” he replied, “we’re all Presbyterians.”

From Tracy, The Upward Call, 163-64.

Guided Discussion

After the Bible study of 1 Thessalonians 2, and after the story “Under the Eucalyptus Tree,” pose these questions for discussion.

Allow students an opportunity to respond.

Is such a plan only for churches that have a lot of professionals in their membership? Or could congregations of working-class people do a similar ministry?

Do you have anything like this mentoring program in the church you attend? If not, should one be started? How?

If you were a teenager again, what sort of vocational or professional mentor would you want? Any certain person come to mind as a possible mentor? Even though you cannot go back to high school age and become that person’s mentee, someone else could. Can you think of a teen whom you could match up with this mentor?

If you had the job of writing up a mentor’s training curriculum for a program like we see in the story above, what main elements would you include?

Faith Mentoring Roles

Refer students to Resource 18-2.

Faith mentoring opportunities may last from a day to a decade. During these mentoring relationships in which the experienced, spiritually mature believer mentors a new or inexperienced Christian, several types of roles occur. They include:

Coach: The faith mentor serving as coach teaches us the rules of the game, sharpens our skills, encourages us when the going gets rough, challenges us when we want to give up, and holds us accountable for our performance. The mentor-coach makes us watch the game films in painful slow motion. The he or she teaches us new skills, skills we may not even know we need until “coach” points them out.

From Wesley, Letters, 5:87.

When Jane Hilton, a new Christian under the mentoring of John Wesley, was devastated by a withering temptation, he wrote to her, “Christ is yours; and He is wiser and stronger than all the powers of hell. Hang upon Him . . . lean upon Him the whole weight of your soul.” Her faith mentor would not let her give up. Don’t we all need such a mentor at certain times in our lives?

One thing about the coach—he or she can teach rules and skills for the game, but the coach never takes your place on the playing field. He or she helps you play a better game, but it’s still your game, your responsibility, and your challenge.

Model: The faith mentor must be someone that the mentee wants to be like. The Thessalonians found such a person in Paul. Paul, for one, was not afraid to take the role of model. He wrote, “You know what kind of persons we proved to be among you. . . . And you became imitators of us and the Lord” (1 Thess 1:5-6, NRSV). He went on to say, “You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you” (1 Thess 2:10, NRSV). The model is not trying to reproduce himself or herself in the person being taught. Rather, the point is to help them become more fully themselves through encounters with the model of integrity and truth. As the person being mentored grows, the need for that particular kind of model is outgrown. Then, the good faith mentor is glad to let the mentee go on to bigger and better things without clinging or making demands that the mentee stay.

Gift-giver: A faith mentor has a treasured heritage, and valuable lessons learned by experience about the Christian faith. The faith mentor has a stake in handing down the gems of the faith to the younger generation. Doctrines, sacraments, values, morals are not preached dogmatically, but the faith mentor lives the heritage before the person being mentored.

From Upward Call, 187-88.

“Beware of the spiritual guide who does not form a bridge between the biblical core of the Christian faith and everyday life. Beware of the spiritual guide who does not lead you to the Church, the called-out community of faith.”

Map-maker: In some mentoring relationships the mentor helps the mentee gain a long-range view of his or her past life and the future possibilities. From this comprehensive view of the person’s past along with a realistic understanding of the present, the mentor can help the mentee map out attainable goals.

Sponsor: Sondra Higgins Matthaei reports a Los Angeles church that has formalized the role of faith mentor in a sponsor program. Each young person seeking to be “confirmed” is publicly assigned a sponsor whose role is printed for all the church to see:

- A model of how a person of faith lives in today’s world
- A friend who knows the candidate and can witness to the maturing faith of the candidate before the community
- A guide, confidant, and listener.
- A learner who is interested in his or her own personal growth as he or she walks the faith journey with the sponsored youth
- One who will . . . invite the candidate into fuller participation into parish life and service

From “Faith Mentoring in the Faith Community,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont School of Theology, 1986, 62.

Midwife of the soul: The faith mentor is often dealing with one who has yet to discover, understand, and claim the spiritual realities of himself or herself of God. The faith mentor in Celtic literature is sometimes described as midwife of the soul—aiding the birth of the spiritual life. The one being taught is shown the deep needs and possibilities of his or her own heart and soul. New birth includes discovering how his or her spiritual yearnings connect with the Spirit of God. Mentoring spiritual births and rebirths requires patience, love, and discernment.

From Upward Call, 185.

Advocate: A faith mentor advocate may go to bat for you, defend, explain, or protect you when most people have given up on you or are impatient with your slow and confused development. “An advocate supports your honest search for meaning, truth, identity, showing patience and giving you space to grow.”

Guarantor: Faith mentor guarantors are working models that show to the young or inexperienced that the next step up the spiritual ladder is worth taking. God makes the future worthwhile, thus the spiritual disciplines that give a Christlike shape to the future are worth the effort.

Guided Discussion

Encourage students to respond and share.

Which of the foregoing roles of faith mentors has someone served for you? Who has been your coach, guarantor, advocate, model, etc.?

Which of the foregoing faith mentor roles have you served for someone else?

Can you think of someone in your present ministry situation that needs a faith mentor? What roles would a faith mentor need to serve for him or her right now?

Faith Mentor’s Pledge

The world is full of people who are anxious to impart what they know by writing a book, by teaching a class, by making a video, by leading a seminar. All these usually have a financial reward as well. But while there are thousands who are willing to reach out to the masses, only a few people are willing to share their very hearts and lives through mentoring. The demands on time, energy, and fortitude are high. Spending more time with fewer people is often a lot harder than reaching out to the masses. Only a handful of Christians “are willing to be transparent, vulnerable, and open about their successes and their failures, their joys and their pain, their faith and their doubts.”

From Ron Lee Davis, Mentoring: the Strategy of the Master (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 23.

Refer students to Resource 18-3.

Here’s what’s expected for same-gender faith mentors:

1. I will spend the time it takes to build an intensely bonded relationship with the person I am mentoring.
2. I commit myself to the task of visualizing and articulating the possibilities and potential of the person I am mentoring.

3. I will be honest, yet affirming, in confronting the errors, faults, prejudices, and immaturities of the person I am mentoring.
4. I will be verbal and transparent before the mentee. I will share my own failures and brokenness, my strengths and successes as part of a relationship of integrity.
5. I commit myself to stand by the learner through trials and hardships—even if these are invoked or self-inflicted by the mentee’s ignorance, error, or mistakes.
6. I will help the person I mentor set spiritual and life goals and share his or her dreams.
7. I will help the learner objectively evaluate progress toward his or her goals.
8. I commit myself to living out everything I teach.
9. I am willing not only to teach but also to be taught by the learner as the Spirit directs.
10. I will let the mentee go when the time comes, wishing him or her the best in taking the next step. I will not try to reproduce myself in the learner, but help him or her become the person God had in mind when He created this person.

Guided Discussion

Encourage students to respond.

What keeps most Christians from making the commitments required of faith mentors?

Do you think that faith mentoring should be a same-gender relationship? Why?

What needs to be added [or subtracted] from the faith mentor’s pledge?

Twin Souls and Spiritual Friends

(30 minutes)

You have the choice of presenting this material in lecture-discussion form, or you could assign each of the three exercises to one small group and call for a report to the whole class, thus each student will have worked in depth on one exercise and heard reports on the other two.

If you used the small-group method in first part of this lesson, you may want to make this part a lecture-discussion exercise.

Another plan would be to use part 1 of this section as a lecture-

An important part of the pastoral theology of John Wesley was the pairing of mature Christians as “twin

discussion exercise and parts 2 and 3 as small-group exercises.

souls” or spiritual friends. These saints would help each other live a holy life growing in Christ likeness.

Our Christian Heritage of Soul Friends

From Reflecting God, 134.

The Celtic saint Brigit (ninth century) told her foster son, “Go forth and eat nothing until you get a soul-friend, for anyone without a soul-friend is like a body without a head.”

Aelred of Rievaulx (12th century) celebrates the blessing of a soul friend.

What happiness, what security, what joy to have someone to whom you dare to speak on terms of equality to another self; one to whom you need have no fear to confess your failings; one to whom you can unblushingly make known what progress you have made in the spiritual life; one to whom you can entrust all the secrets of your heart.

Quoted by Edward C. Sellnor, Mentoring: The Ministry of Spiritual Kinship (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989), 156.

From Letters, 8: 158.

John Wesley believed that all Christians need the support of spiritual friendship and guidance. To Frances Godfrey, whom he addressed as “My Dear Fanny,” he wrote, “It is a blessed thing to have fellow travelers to the New Jerusalem. If you do not find any you must make them for none can travel this road alone.” Even wealthy bankers like Ebenezer Blackwell needed spiritual friends. Wesley wrote to him, “I am fully persuaded if you had always one or two faithful friends near you who could speak the very truth from their heart and watch over you in love, you would swiftly advance.”

From Letters, 3: 94-95.

From Letters, 5: 187.

To Mary Bosanquet he wrote, “You have need of a steady guide and one that knows you well.”

Wesley’s letter to Ann Bolton, written when he was 82 years of age, shows both the need and the qualities Wesley expected in a spiritual friend.

My Dear Nancy—It is undoubtedly expedient for you to have a friend in whom you can fully confide that can always be near you or at a small distance, and ready to be consulted on all occasions. The time was when you took me to be your friend; and (to speak freely) I have loved you with no common affection. I “have loved you”—nay, I still do; my heart warms to you while I am writing. But I am generally at too great a distance, so that you cannot converse with me when you would. I am glad, therefore, that Providence has given you one whom you can more

From Letters, 7:278.

easily see and correspond with. You may certainly trust her in every instance; and she has . . . understanding, piety and experience. She may therefore perform those offices of friendship which I would rejoice to perform were I near you. But whenever you can, give me the pleasure of seeing you.

(San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 55.

A more recent testimony comes from Emilie Griffin. She writes in *Clinging: The Experience of Prayer* about how God sends a soul friend at just the right times. “To ‘find’ a spiritual friend is truly to be found, to be chased down, smoked out of one’s hiding place in the corner of existence and brought into the center, swept into the blazing presence of God. . . . This love . . . is . . . the friendship of the saints in heaven and on earth.”

Another contemporary minister testifies that he has led spiritual formation seminars and classes among evangelicals on three continents. Part of the seminar work is a spiritual life profile test that flags strengths and weakness in the spiritual life. Whether clergy or lay, men or women, married or single, American or European or Asian or Hispanic the most glaring lack evangelicals say is that they don’t have a spiritual friend. They don’t have anyone to talk to about the things that matter most.

Guided Discussion

Pose these discussion questions, adding others that fit the specific needs and interests of the students.

Why do you think having a twin soul or spiritual friend is important?

Why is this so neglected among evangelical Christians?

How would you rate your success in finding a soul friend about whom you could explore any needs or aspirations of the spiritual life? Give yourself a grade.

Thoughts on Spiritual Friendship

Refer students to Resource 18-4.

1. Soul friends help each other achieve extension *animi ad magna*, the “stretching of the soul to great things.”
2. “No mind is so good that it does not need another mind to counter and equal it, and to save it from deceit and bigotry and folly” (cited without reference by Sellnor, *Mentoring*, 155-56).
3. A soul friend can listen and know what it feels like to be that person, what forces propel him or her, what holds the person back, what calls him or her forward.

4. Twin soul arrangements seem to “happen” more than they are planned or programmed. Perhaps they cannot be programmed at all.
5. Pastors and church leaders should let people know that they don’t have to be singing in the choir, teaching a class, or heading the Building and Grounds Committee to be doing the work of God. Praying and counseling with a mentee or soul friend is also doing the work of God and the Church.
6. Though most twin soul relationships more or less just happen in the providence of God, faith mentoring and spiritual friendship can become more “on purpose” than in the past.
7. Soul friends serve as mirrors for each other. They provide a different view of the self. They see each other in different ways and help each other see potential for growth and service.
8. Though spiritual friends share the spiritual life “without reserve and without disguise,” to use Wesley’s words, that does not mean that they share every detail of job, marriage, finances, etc. Family and financial matters may come up in prayer requests, answered prayer praises, and the like, but the focus is on helping each other live the deeper spiritual life.
9. A sacred accountability is shared between soul friends. They hold each other to high standards, even if it means challenging irrational, unspiritual, or prejudicial attitudes and behaviors.
10. The single stone that marks the graves of poet Robert Frost and his wife in Bennington, VT, are inscribed with the words, “Wing to wing and oar to oar.” Every Christian needs a spiritual companion wing to wing and oar to oar.
11. Old Chinese Proverb:
 - If you are planting for a year, plant grain.
 - If you are planting for a decade, plant trees.
 - If you are planting for a century, plant people.

Guided Discussion

Encourage students to respond.

Think about someone who has served as a mentor or as a spiritual friend. *If you were to write them a letter of thanks today, what would you say?*

John Wesley taught that one couldn’t make the Christian journey without spiritual friends and companions on the way. In one place he said one would be crazy to try to live the spiritual life alone.

What is your opinion?

Qualities Needed for Faith Mentors and Spiritual Friends

We have gleaned from the writings of Christians from St. Basil to Kenneth Leech and others the qualities that good spiritual guides have demonstrated through the centuries. If one is in the market for a mentor or soul friend, these are the qualities to look for:

Refer to Resource 18-5.

1. A well-established Christian, not a novice or a new convert.
2. A person with a good reputation and strong character.
3. A person who knows the Scriptures.
4. A man or woman who is both loving and learned. Competent in theology and human relationships.
5. Someone who knows the history of the Christian faith and prizes its treasures.
6. A man or woman known for personal holiness.
7. A person possessed and led by the Holy Spirit.
8. A man or woman who has the gift of discerning the movements of the Spirit.
9. A person who embodies the grace of God.
10. A person who practices frankness and honesty.
11. A person who listens and shows tender respect.
12. A man or woman with the gift of patience.
13. A person of peace and tranquility and free from greed.
14. A person who prefers God over things.
15. A man or woman who practices self-giving love, openness, and vulnerability in relationships.
16. A person who knows forgiveness and is forgiving.
17. A person of experience in life and in prayer.
18. A person who loves the poor.
19. _____
20. _____

Guided Discussion

Encourage students to respond.

As you read over the list of qualities above, open your heart to see faces and names. *For example, when you read, "A man or woman known for personal holiness" or "A person who knows the Scriptures" who comes to mind?*

If you were called upon to be a soul friend, which of the foregoing qualities would those who know you say you have? Which ones would you say you most sorely lack?

Lesson Close

(10 minutes)

Review

Collect papers after students finish.

Write a “One-Minute Paper” that completes this sentence stem: The main thing I learned today is . . .

Looking Ahead

This lesson closes our unit on the community disciples in which we have studied worship, the sacraments, face-to-face groups, and the ministry mentoring and twin soul pairs. Next time we start Unit 5: The Disciplines of Service.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the Student Guide.

Letter to a Mentor: Think of someone who served you as a mentor—spiritual or vocational or personal—and write a letter of thanks, even if you have “outgrown” that person and his or her ideas now.

Conversation Report: Before the next class set up informal conversations with at least two different people about faith mentors and soul friends. Record the responses, feelings, insights that came up. Did the conversations take any surprising turns? What never came up that you expected to be discussed? Write a one- to three-page typewritten report.

Journal Prompt: Write a prayer dialogue between you and the Lord about this matter of faith mentoring and twin souls ministry.

Punctuate the Finish

A Rope of Sand

In his old age, George Whitefield, the famous evangelist who preached to more throngs than John Wesley ever did, looked back dolefully on his career. “Brother Wesley acted wisely,” he said. “The souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in class, and thus preserved the fruits of his labor. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand.”

From The Upward Call, 139.

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Lesson 19

The Spiritual Disciplines of Service

For Unit 5, Introduction and Objectives, see Resource 19-0

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Introduction	Orient	Student Guide Marker board
0:10	Formative Teaching	Small-Group Activity	Resource 19-1
0:40	Disciplines of Service	Jigsaw Group Activity	Resource 19-2 Resource 19-3 Resource 19-4
1:15	Lesson Close	Review, Assign	Student Guide Resource 19-5 Resource 19-6

Suggested Background Reading for the Teacher

Lyle Pointer, Jim Dorsey, *Evangelism in Everyday Life* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1998), 9-84.

Janine Tartaglia, et al., *The Upward Call* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1994), 201-44.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), 155-70.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Workbook*, 105-11.

Wes Tracy, *Reflecting God Leader's Guide*, 41-43.

Wesley Tracy, *New Testament Evangelism Today* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1973), 27-74.

John Wesley, "The Use of Money" and "A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists," *Works*, (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, reprint, 1978), 6: 124-36; 8: 248-68.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- build an awareness and develop an evaluative level of understanding that Christian service is a spiritual discipline as basic as prayer or Bible study
- make acceptance of service as a spiritual discipline a "second nature" owned and internalized
- engage in Christian service with renewed vigor and with insight that it builds spiritual muscle as well as offering service to Christ and helping people

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Letter to a mentor
Conversation report
Journaling

Assign for next lesson

Jigsaw Activities

Activities from the Jigsaw Group Activities in this lesson that were not covered in class.

Your Network

Begin to develop evangelism as a discipline of service today. Refer to Resource 19-6 and complete the list of people in your network that you can minister to.

Journal Prompt

- Write in your journal a list of five one-word descriptors of your teaching in the past. In what ways would you like to see improvement? Again, list five one-word descriptors that state what your aim is in regard to formative Christian teaching.
- One of the benefits of the spiritual discipline of preaching comes right back to the preacher himself or herself. As a pastor you have to preach every few days. That keeps you on your knees before God, asking His direction, forgiveness, cleansing. The duty of preaching alone can keep one walking closer

to God. In your journal write about a time when your prayer and self-examination in preparation for a sermon (or other religious presentation) resulted in your own spiritual progress.

- It is easy when studying Christian service to get quite glum about the things we haven't done. But in your journal, record and thank God for the things He has helped to actually do. Then, be open to the Lord's leading about what He wants you to do next in the way of serving those for whom Jesus suffered and rose again so they could find salvation.

Journal Check

Be prepared to show your journal to the learning leader, the teacher of this class, next session. The teacher will not read it in detail. The journal will not be handed in, but it will be briefly inspected to note regularity and quality of entries, organization, etc.

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on two or three students to share their conversation report. Return and collect homework.

Motivator

“Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced . . . that those who live [in Christ] should no longer live for themselves” (2 Cor 5:14-15).

Orientation

Today we begin a new unit—The Spiritual Disciplines of Service. In Units 1 and 2 we followed the *ordo salutis*, the order of salvation, in examining the human predicament, God’s redemptive response of grace and transforming sanctification.

Unit 3 explored the personal spiritual disciplines and devotional skills including Bible study, prayer, the disciplines of abstinence, and spiritual journaling.

Unit 4 began our look outward to embrace community disciplines of worship, the sacraments, face-to-face groups, family religion, spiritual friends, and faith mentors.

True to the Wesleyan heritage, service is as much a spiritual discipline as prayer or Bible study. In fact, a spirituality that does not lead to service is a noxious preoccupation with self that manicures the soul while ignoring the agonies of the world and our responsibility to the community of faith. In this unit we will face the challenge of seeing service as a spiritual discipline, a natural response to our personal spiritual formation.

A 90-second Brainstorm

During the Brainstorm activity, have someone write all answers on a marker board, overhead, or flip-chart paper as quickly as possible.

Do not allow any discussion or clarification during the 90-second period. The only comment from you should be “Thank you. Is there another answer?” Do not give any response that would assign value to an answer and perhaps limit

answers. The goal is to generate as many one- or two-word answers as possible within the time allowed.

Assign one student to be a timekeeper. The activity is to stop after exactly 90 seconds, no more.

You should be looking specifically for the service areas of teaching, preaching, evangelism and mission, and mercy and compassion. You may need to guide the discussion to include these areas.

We are going to spend 90 seconds generating as many answers as possible to this question—*What are areas of Christian service for laity and clergy?* The answers may only be one or two words long and we will not have any discussion or clarification of the words during the 90-second session. After the 90 seconds is over, we will come back and categorize and discuss the answers we have generated.

Does everyone understand the question? Okay, [student's name,] you will be our timekeeper. Stop us exactly 90 seconds from now. Who has an answer?

(90 seconds later)

Let's read through the list and see which areas of service are for clergy, which are for laity, and which are for both. This is the time for clarifying and discussing the answers we have given.

(After discussion and clarification)

Today we will examine four specific disciplines of service from this list—teaching, preaching, evangelism and mission, and mercy and compassion. Within the Modular Course of Study full modules are designed to explore each of these topics in-depth. Today you will focus on them as they relate to spiritual disciplines of service.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

To help students

- **build an awareness and develop an evaluative level of understanding that Christian service is a spiritual discipline as basic as prayer or Bible study**
- **make acceptance of service as a spiritual discipline a “second nature” owned and internalized**
- **engage in Christian service with renewed vigor and with insight that it builds spiritual muscle as well as offering service to Christ and helping people**

Lesson Body

Group Activity: Jesus, a Formative Teacher

(30 minutes)

The Bible says that nothing we ever do is more important than teaching.

The Bible gives us the last words of Jesus on earth: “Go and make disciples . . . teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Mt 28: 19-20).

The Bible says that pastors are to be skillful teachers (2 Tim 2:24). In the same chapter the Bible says that pastors are to teach what they have learned to faithful people “who will be able to teach others also” (v. 2, RSV). We must teach so well that our students will become good teachers.

The Bible says that parents should be such good teachers that their children will never forget what they were taught. In Deuteronomy parents are told to never stop teaching. “These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates” (6: 6-9).

The Bible says that on the day of judgment those who have been wise teachers shall shine like the stars of heaven forever and ever (cf. Dan 12:3, NIV). The greatest rewards on judgment day will go to teachers.

The Bible reveals that when God wanted to save the world He sent His only Son not as a soldier, not as a ruler, but as a teacher.

Is that enough for us to take the service of Christian teaching seriously?

Jesus’ First Day at School

On Jesus, fifth birthday Mary got the little boy up early, before dawn. After a bath, she dressed Him in a simple scholar’s robe with blue fringes. Today would be the first day of school for the blessed boy. While it was still

Read this in an oral presentation or have students read aloud from Resource 19-1. Then discuss as per the reflection and discussion guide at the end.

dark Joseph led the boy to school. It was a two-mile walk. We think we know where the synagogue school that the young Jesus attended was. It was on the outskirts of Nazareth.

In those days you did not wait until school began in September. When your fifth birthday came you started to school. The ritual for the first day is well known. And we suppose that Jesus had the same experiences that every other Jewish boy did.

The first stop on Jesus' first day of school was at the reading desk. We know what they read for the Bible lesson of the day because it was always the same when a new student enrolled. The scroll of the Torah was opened to Exodus 20, the Ten Commandments. And the Torah came first—ahead of study, ahead of recess, ahead of greeting your playmates or even the teacher. So as Jesus followed along, the Ten Commandments were read with great reverence.

At age five Jesus could already read. Doubtless He could recite the Ten Commandments because Mary and Joseph had instructed Him in the Scriptures since before He was three. It was the same in every Jewish family where God and the Torah were taken seriously.

After the reading of the heart of the Law, the Torah, young Jesus was taken to the house of the teacher who usually lived next door. Meeting the teacher was a big moment. The teacher greeted Jesus just like he greeted every new student. He knelt on one knee, lowering himself to the little boy's level. Then he "welcomed his new student by enfolding him in his arms." Did you get that? The first duty of the teacher was to bend down to the child's level and hug the new student the first time he met him.

If that teacher had known who it was that he hugged that day! Teachers, you never know. I hope that teacher wasn't saying to himself, "Just what I need, another five-year-old to take care of. And the carpenter's kid at that. I wish we could get a higher class of student in this district."

Eating the Book

Later in the morning the teacher presented Jesus with a slate tablet. On it, in abbreviated form, were written the Ten Commandments in chalk. The letters of the Hebrew alphabet were also written on it. At the bottom there was one sentence: "The Law shall be my calling."

It was the same for every new student. When he grew up his vocation might be farmer, shoemaker, baker, priest, chariot mechanic, or camel driver—but whatever his vocation, his calling was the Law, the Scriptures! “The Law will be my calling,” the slate said. The teacher helped Jesus read the commandments, and then had Him repeat, “The Law will be my calling.”

All the schoolboys watched. They knew what was coming next. They knew the new student would have to “eat the book.” They had all done it. Sure enough, the teacher brings out an earthenware jar. It is filled with honey. Carefully the teacher pours the honey on Jesus’ chalk-written slate. Carefully he spreads the honey over all the commandments and the sentence written on the slate: “The Law shall be my calling.” Then, he hands the slate to the five-year-old Jesus and says, “Now, my son, eat the book.”

Jesus knows what to do. Joseph has told him all about this ceremony at home many times. Jesus is ready. All eyes are upon Him. Carefully the boy begins to lick the honey off the slate. The honey, along with the chalk-written words, comes off the slate on His tongue. No snickers. No one laughs. This is serious business. As Jesus licks the slate clean, the teacher solemnly says to Him, “May the Law of the Lord be sweet as honey to you as long as you live.”

You remember, don’t you, that both Ezekiel and John the Revelator wrote something like, “And I ate the book, and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey.” They were both recalling the experience of their first day of school, and, of course, every Jewish reader of their words knew exactly what they were talking about.

Sweet Cakes and Prayer

Still later in the day, probably about noon, just before the school day was over—it was so hot there that school ran from dawn until noon—another special event awaited the young Jesus. It was the ceremony of the sweet cakes. The teacher brought out an expensive dessert made of nuts, raisins, figs or dates, and honey. A rare treat and only the first-day student received it.

The sweet cake was prepared in a special way. Sometimes the teacher would make it in the shape of a “T” that stood for “Torah” or “Law.” Sometimes he decorated it with frosting or icing writing letters that symbolized the Law or Torah.

The teacher explains the shape and symbols on the

sweet cake. And once again, Jesus repeats after the teacher. “The Law shall be my calling.” Once again, the teacher tells Jesus to eat the sweet cake. As He eats and the other kids watch, the teacher says, “May the Holy Law always be to you as sweet as the finest dessert. And as this food gives strength to your body, may your strength come from the Law of God all the days of your life.”

When the young Jesus finishes the sweet cake, it is time for prayer. The teacher puts his hand on Jesus’ curly little head and he prays the prayer of “Two Petitions.” First he prays and asks that the angels of God will open Jesus’ heart. Second, he prays that God will strengthen the boy’s mind and His memory so that He will never forget the day when He promised, “The Law shall be my calling.” And with the prayer of Two Petitions the first day of school was over for yet another Jewish boy.

Well, would this type of education work?

From that first day of school in which Jesus “ate the book” as sweet as honey, and when He ate the sweet cakes and promised, “The Law shall be my calling,” let’s move ahead some 28 years. Would Jesus, a quarter of a century or more later, still think that the Law was His calling?

Come with me. Jesus is preaching on the Mount of Beatitudes. Listen carefully. He speaks. “Make no mistake,” He says. “Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law . . . I did not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it. Truly, I tell you that not one punctuation point of the Law shall pass away till heaven and earth pass away. And whoever breaks the least of these commandments and teaches men to do so shall be the least in the kingdom of heaven, but anyone who keeps the Law and teaches others to keep it, that one will be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (author’s paraphrase of Matt 5: 17-20).

From Reginald Cross. Used by permission of the author.

Allow students to respond.

Refer to Resource 19-1. Allow time for students to write their responses.

Ask for students to voluntarily share their responses. Discussion should follow.

I ask you, did it work? That first day of school was an educational experience that Jesus never got over.

Formative Christian teaching leads to transformation. How was Jesus’ life transformed by His first day of school experience?

On Resource 19-1, list three important things about teaching and learning that the foregoing account brings to your mind. What teaching opportunities exist for pastors?

Jigsaw Activity: Spiritual Disciplines of Service

(35 minutes)

Divide the class into Base Groups and assign one of these activities to each group. Following group discussions, each group will report to the whole on the spiritual discipline of service they examined.

Spend 20 minutes in group discussions and 15 minutes presenting reports to the whole class.

If your class has more than three Base Groups, you may assign an activity to more than one Base Group. If your class has fewer than three Base Groups, then assign the remaining activities as homework.

Refer one Base Group to Resource 19-2.

Discipline: Preaching

“There is, perhaps, no greater hardship at present inflicted on mankind in civilized and free countries, than the necessity of listening to sermons. No one but a preaching clergyman has . . . the power of compelling an audience to sit silent and be tormented. No one but a preaching clergyman can revel in platitudes, truisms and untruths, and yet receive, as his undisputed privilege, the same respectful demeanour as though words of impassioned eloquence, or persuasive logic, fell from his lips” (Anthony Trollope, *Barchester Towers*, 1857).

“It is a sin to assemble a congregation each week and enter into the pulpit poorly prepared” (Arndt L. Halvorson, *Authentic Preaching*).

“Spiritual formation occurs through the ministry of preaching. . . . preaching acts as one of the greatest tools of spiritual formation within the church” (Mel Lawrenz, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation*)

Formative preaching is “an event of the Word. The living Word (Christ) and the written Word (the Scriptures), in conjunction with the spoken word (sermon), creates an event of the Word, as the servant of the Word proclaims upon the housetops what he or she has heard in secret” (Wesley Tracy, *What’s a Nice God Like You Doing in a Place Like This?* [Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1990], 11).

In what ways is personal spiritual formation expressed in the service discipline of preaching?

Good preaching is based on the Good Book. Good preaching comes from good people. Good preaching needs good structure.

How does spiritual formation contribute to these three statements about good preaching?

Discipline: Evangelism and Mission

Refer Base Group to Resource 19-3.

Who Will Answer Her questions?

Dr. Fred Craddock told in a sermon about attending a joint meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature. Some 3,000 of the world's best scholars and teachers had gathered in Los Angeles to dig into papers, lectures, and panel discussions of the most scholarly sort. Craddock said it took a lot of energy just to listen to those deep papers, so he took a coffee break. In the lobby of the hotel where the meeting was being held a woman, about 40, stopped him just outside the coffee shop. "Are you attending the meeting here of Bible people?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Can anyone come?"

"Well, to some of the lessons, yes."

"Well, I want to come," she said.

"Why?" Craddock asked.

She told him that since she was 16 she had walked the streets selling her body. "The other night," she said, "I caught my teenage daughter beginning to do the same thing. I want to become a Christian. I've got to do something."

She had a Bible, an old Bible with a zipper. "I couldn't think of a lesson I could send her to," said Craddock.

They went into the coffee shop. Dr. Craddock (a New Testament scholar) opened her Bible and read her some of it. They talked. He explained the gospel. They prayed. Then Craddock made a phone call to a church in the neighborhood. A pastor from that church came, and the pastor and the new believer drove away together.

By this time Craddock had completely missed the lecture on "A Postmodern Critique of the Bultmannian Hermeneutic."

Scholarship is important. Without it the Church would sink in prejudice and sentimentality. Craddock explained why he missed the lesson. "Somebody had to answer the woman's questions."

Reflection and Discussion

1. What does this true story tell you about ministerial priorities?

2. What does it tell you about the “readiness” of people to listen to the gospel?
3. What does this story say about the place of the Bible in personal evangelism?
4. Does this story say that scholarship is of little value?
5. What does this story say about the role of the local church in nurturing converts?

Discipline: Mercy and Compassion

Refer students to Resource 19-4.

The French are great cyclists and the Tour de France the greatest bicycle race of all. If you watch the French team, you will see the *domestique* (the word means “servant”). He will not win the race. He is not intended to win. Yet mile after weary mile he pedals on. His job is to shield the top cyclist who will win the race. The *domestique* shields him from the wind and creates a draft in which the “star” cyclist will ride throughout the race. The *domestique* gets no trophy, no wild cheers from adoring fans. The one he has enabled to win the race is crowned—and that is enough for him. Holy service is all about becoming a *domestique* for Christ and our fellow travelers.

From Reflecting God, 158.

Pity Is Not Enough

It is not enough to occasionally feel pity for those in need. We must, if we are to be truly Christian, step into identity and solidarity with those in any kind of need. Consider these thoughts on this topic.

“It is a fact that every time a man feels a noble impulse without taking action, he becomes less likely ever to take action. In a sense it is true to say that a man has no right to feel sympathy unless he at least tries to put that sympathy into action” (William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible, James and Peter*, 76).

“Anyone can salve his conscience by an occasional foray into knitting for the spastic home. Did you ever take a real trip down inside the broken heart of a friend? To feel the sob of the soul—the raw, red crucible of emotional agony. . . . This is the beginning of compassion” (Jess Moody, *Quote—Unquote* [Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1977], 66).

Christlike compassion “is not knowing about the suffering and pain of others. It is in some way knowing that pain, entering in to it, sharing it and tasting it” (Matthew Fox, *A Spirituality Named Compassion* [Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1971], 21).

“The church will not wax radiant until we learn how to receive love. . . . There is a certain superiority when we give love to others, and a certain helplessness when others offer love to us. When we give love we are in control. We pick the person or persons we will honor with our love, how much we will dole out at a time, and if and when we will give it. When we are on the receiving end of love and assistance we are no longer in control. The other person decides how, when, and how much. We are almost helpless as receivers, but we must learn to receive love from each other or settle for being a proudly grim bunch of believers” (*Reflecting God*, 157).

“There should be less talk; a preaching point is not a meeting point. What do you do then? Take a broom and clean someone’s house. That says enough” (Mother Teresa of Calcutta, as quoted by Janine Tartaglia, et al., *The Upward Call*, 235).

Response

Discuss these quotations about mercy and compassion and determine a story, true or imaginary, that demonstrates one or more of the points made in the quotations.

Lesson Close

(15 minutes)

Review

Instruct students to locate objectives in the Student Guide.

- Look at the learner objectives for this lesson. Have you
- built an awareness and developed an evaluative level of understanding that Christian service is a spiritual discipline as basic as prayer or Bible study
 - made acceptance of service as a spiritual discipline a “second nature” owned and internalized
 - engaged in Christian service with renewed vigor and with insight that it builds spiritual muscle as well as offering service to Christ and helping people

Look Ahead

The next unit will be our final meeting together. Be sure to bring your journals for a review as discussed in the homework assignment.

Assign Homework

Direct students to the homework assignments in the Student Guide.

Jigsaw Activities

Activities from the Jigsaw Group Activities in this lesson that were not covered in class.

Your Network

Begin to develop evangelism as a discipline of service today. Refer to Resource 19-6 and complete the list of people in your network that you can minister to.

Journal Prompt

- Write in your journal a list of five one-word descriptors of your teaching in the past. In what ways would you like to see improvement? Again, list five one-word descriptors that state what your aim is in regard to formative Christian teaching.
- One of the benefits of the spiritual discipline of preaching comes right back to the preacher himself or herself. As a pastor you have to preach every few days. That keeps you on your knees before God, asking His direction, forgiveness, cleansing. The duty of preaching alone can keep one walking closer to God. In your journal write about a time when your prayer and self-

examination in preparation for a sermon (or other religious presentation) resulted in your own spiritual progress.

- It is easy when studying Christian service to get quite glum about the things we haven't done. But in your journal, record and thank God for the things He has helped to actually do. Then, be open to the Lord's leading about what He wants you to do next in the way of serving those for whom Jesus suffered and rose again so they could find salvation.

Journal Check

Be prepared to show your journal to the learning leader, the teacher of this class, next session. The learning leader will not read it in detail. The journal will not be handed in, but it will be briefly inspected to note regularity and quality of entries, organization, etc.

Punctuate the Finish

Refer to Resource 19-5. Read "How Gifted Do You Have to Be to Serve?" and follow the response.

If they had Oscars and Emmys for Christian witness and service, my vote would go to Angelina.

I don't know the real name of this Puerto Rican lady, so let me name her according to her angel-like character.

Angelina lives in Hell's Kitchen—that section of New York where flying bullets and cruising thugs put the life expectancy graph into a sharp nosedive.

But Angelina got saved at pastor Bill Wilson's church. And you know how it is—you get saved and you want to give and serve.

With the help of an interpreter she asked her pastor for a job in the church. Not being able to speak a word of English, what in the world could she do? Pastor Wilson told her to ride the Sunday School buses and "love the kids." She did.

Soon she came back and said she wanted to ride just one bus. You see, on that one route was a special little boy who came to the Saturday kid's ministry and to Sunday School every week. He was a sad little guy with hungry eyes who never uttered a sound, not one word, ever.

So every week Angelina held the child on her lap on the bus and loved him the best she could. She even learned one sentence in English to pass on to the boy,

“I love you and Jesus loves you.” She told him this over and over, week after week.

One day to her astonishment the little guy looked up into her face and stammered, “I—I love you too.” Finally! Finally he had responded to love!

That was 2:30 on a Saturday afternoon. At 6:30 that evening, when most Christians were settling down to watch “Wheel of Fortune” or ESPN someone found the boy’s body in a garbage bag under the fire escape.

Someone said that the little fellow had knocked over the last bottle of beer in the house. His mother beat him to death and threw him in the garbage.

Angelina had so little to give. But when God needed someone to be the “light of the world” to a little neglected and rejected boy who had never known love, Angelina was ready. Did she know she was ministering to Jesus himself?

From Reflecting God, 153-54.

“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him . . . Since . . . we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men” (2 Cor 5:10-11).

Responses

Lead in prayer.

Prayer: This true story makes us want to pray, not testify.

Following prayer and before students leave the class, have them list specific acts of compassion they will undertake.

Do something on purpose.

Lesson 20

Wesleyan-Holiness Spirituality: An Overview

Lesson Overview

Schedule

Start Time	Task or Topic	Learning Activity	Materials Needed
0:00	Lesson Introduction	Wesley Hymn	Student Guide
0:10	The Shape of Wesleyan-Holiness Spiritual Theology for Today	Lecture/Discussion	Resource 20-1
0:45	Brochure or Website	Group Activity	Resource 20-2
1:00	Looking Back	Evaluation Instrument	Resource 20-3
1:25	Lesson Close	Final Business/Closing Charge	Student Guide Resource 20-4

Suggested Background Reading for The Teacher

J. Kenneth Grider, "The Nature of Wesleyan Theology," *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 17, no. 2 (Fall, 1982): 41-60.

David L. McKenna, *What a Time to Be Wesleyan!* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1999), 11-152.

Wesley Tracy, et al., *Reflecting God* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City and Christian Holiness Partnership, 2000), 171-79.

Morris Weigelt and E. Dee Freeborn, *The Lord's Prayer: Design for Spiritual Formation* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2001).

John Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation" in *Wesley's Fifty-Three Sermons*, Edward H. Sugden, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 721-33.

Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972), 21-164.

Learner Objectives

To help students

- step back and take a wide-angled view of Wesleyan spiritual theology as it has unfolded during the course and as it is summarized and evaluated in today's lesson
- appreciate the "big picture" of this course and embrace the progress made in their own spiritual journey
- to insightfully implement the ideas and insights of today's lesson by way of intelligent discussion and planning
- make an objective evaluation of this course and the academic and spiritual exercises it provided

Homework Assignments

Due this lesson

Resource 19-6
Journaling
Journal check

Assign for next lesson

For a Lifetime

Commit to BE a student of God's grace.

Journal Prompt

Reflect on Philippians 3:10, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection."

Lesson Introduction

(10 minutes)

Accountability

Call on two students to share their responses to Resource 19-6.

Return all homework.

Motivator

Begin today's lesson by singing together this Wesley hymn (or another of your choice).

Other Wesley hymns that could be used if you do not have the *Wesley Hymns* book available include, "Arise My Soul, Arise," and "And Can It Be?"

Charles Wesley, *Wesley Hymns*, (Kansas City: Lillenas Publishing Company, 1982), 110.

"Help Us to Help Each Other, Lord"

Help us to help each other, Lord;
Each other's cross to bear.
Let each his friendly aid afford
And feel his brother's care,
And feel his brother's care.

Help us to build each other up,
Our little stock improve;
Increase our faith, confirm our hope,
And perfect us in love,
And perfect us in love.

Orientation

The lecture in today's lesson summarizes the teachings of the course in terms of "spiritual theology." This is a bit more technical than most of the previous lesson, but at this point you need to think in theological terms about Wesleyan spirituality.

Today's lesson also gives you a chance to look back over this course and evaluate the contents, materials, and the academic and the spiritual experiences.

Learner Objectives

Instruct students to locate objectives in the *Student Guide*.

Restating the objectives for the learners serves as an advanced organizer for the lesson and alerts learners to key information and concepts.

To help students

- step back and take a wide-angled view of Wesleyan spiritual theology as it has unfolded during the course and as it is summarized and evaluated in today's lesson
- appreciate the "big picture" of this course and embrace the progress made in their own spiritual journey

- **insightfully implement the ideas and insights of today's lesson by way of intelligent discussion and planning**
- **make an objective evaluation of this course and the academic and spiritual exercises it provided**

Lesson Body

Lecture and Discussion: The Shape of Wesleyan-Holiness Spiritual Theology for Today

(35 minutes)

Build a lecture based on the 20 characteristics of Wesleyan-Holiness spirituality. Draw on all you have learned from leading the course, reading the background assignments, and from the information provided at right.

Refer students to Resource 20-1.

Soteriology: spiritual salvation believed in Christian theology to have been accomplished through Jesus.

From Works, 8: 47.

A Wesleyan-Holiness spirituality should build on the Wesleyan appreciation of revelation (Bible), reason, tradition, and experience as it expresses the Wesleyan spirit in relation to the following characteristics.

A Gracious Principle

Grace—prevenient, atoning, saving, sanctifying, perfecting grace—is so foundational to Wesleyan thought that no one within the movement would ever dream of basing the forgiveness of sins upon anything except the free grace of God expressed in the redemptive work of Christ. It is God's initiative that makes possible human response to divine grace. Salvation is never to be *attained*, but *obtained* by grace alone.

Salvation Is the Aim

Wesleyan-Holiness soteriology is not about mental health, psychological adjustment, or shallow activism, but full salvation from sin and restoration of Christlikeness. We need look no farther than the newscast or our own hearts to know that something has gone terribly wrong with the human enterprise. Sin is its Bible name, and Wesleyan soteriology is dealing with the sin problem at a profound, not surface, level. Wesley said:

By salvation I mean, not barely . . . deliverance from hell, or going to heaven; but a present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul to its primitive health, its original purity; a recovery of the divine nature; the renewal of our souls after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, in justice, mercy, and truth.

A Spirituality of Radical Optimism

The Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification is radically more optimistic than scientific behaviorism, determinism, Freudian psychology, stimulus-response, and conditioning education—and much more optimistic

than classic Protestantism. The social sciences dismiss the idea of sin. Classic Protestantism—Luther and Calvin—declares that inner sin will plague the believer as long as he or she lives. The optimism of Wesleyan-Holiness teaching is deliverance from all sin. They believe the Bible is serious when it says the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin and that the Holy Spirit purifies hearts by faith (1 Jn 1 and Acts 8).

Wesleyanism Has an Ecumenical Spirit

What Christians have in common in Christ is more important than sectarian peculiarities. Wesley urges, in his sermon *The Catholic Spirit*, “Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion?”

From Sermons on Several Occasions, (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Book Room, n. d.), 549.

A Biblical Foundation

A spirituality based on the “sufficiency” of Scripture and not the Fundamentalist “paper pope” view of the Bible is what has helped the Wesleyan-Holiness Movement move ahead. The Wesleyan use of the Bible is wide-scooped and tries to deal with the general tenor of Scripture and not “proof texts” collected to make a point. J. Kenneth Grider declares that “Wesleyan theology is biblical, but not narrowly so. . . . It views Scripture through its wide-angle lens . . . as it applies Scripture to a given time . . . and culture . . . after making allowances for the differences between Bible times and our own.”

From “The Nature of Wesleyan Theology,” Wesleyan Theological Journal, 17, No. 2 (Fall 1982): 48, 50.

A Christ-Centered Focus

Jesus Christ, the crucified, resurrected redeemer, is at the heart of Wesleyan spirituality. The Holy Spirit is commonly referred to as the Holy Spirit of Christ—the two are inseparable. For a time some branches of the Holiness Movement drifted into a fascination of spiritual phenomena with unhappy results. “In a hundred different ways on a thousand different occasions, decade after five decades, his [Wesley’s] message was . . . *Christus crucifixus, Christus redemptor, Christus victor.*”

From Albert Outler, Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit, (Nashville: Tidings, 1975), 45.

A Synthetic Method

The Wesleyan spiritual journey is guided by revelation, reason, tradition, and experience (the Wesleyan quadrilateral). Wesley’s theological method was synthetic. That is, he borrowed truth and insights wherever he might find them and braided them into a practical theology. Thus, it was nonsectarian in nature.

He did not mind borrowing from the best thinkers of history whether they be Greek Fathers, English ethicists or German pietists.

A Dynamic Character

Though the Bible is complete, the Holy Spirit of Christ continues to reveal insights to pastors, leaders, and individual Christians about how and what to do in new life settings and situations. Further, the enemies of the faith mount newly aimed opposition movements. When New Age notions blossom, when UFO cults, Islamic fundamentalists, same sex marriage devotees, and cloning issues crest like ocean waves theology cannot just repeat the same old things that served as guideposts when the Crusades or the budding missionary movement held sway. Theology must respond to what scientists are doing in outer space and to what psychiatrists are doing in inner space. Thus, Wesleyan theology is always on the “grow.” No final Wesleyan-Holiness theology will be found that will speak to all situations in ironclad finality.

From Grider, WTJ, 51.

Highly Values Spiritual Experience

In Wesleyan-Holiness churches the requirement for membership is not reciting the catechism but testifying to an “experience” of conversion. Wesleyan-Holiness spirituality takes seriously the witness of assurance of the Spirit, God’s Spirit witnessing with our spirit that we are children of God.

This emphasis on experience and heartfelt religion means that Wesleyan educators take seriously the affective domain—the realm of the emotions, attitudes, and values. That is one reason that every lesson of this course on spiritual formation has an affective objective.

Charles Wesley wrote:

I felt my Lord’s atoning blood
Close to my soul applied;
Me, me, He loved—the Son of God
For me, for me, He died.

From “For the Anniversary of One’s Conversion,” quoted by Henry Bett, The Spirit of Methodism (London: Epworth Press, 1937), 26.

Wesleyan-Holiness Spirituality Values Christian Ethics

The moral and ethical agenda appropriate for Christlike believers is highly regarded. Wesleyan spirituality is not designed for the hermit, the lonely ascetic fighting evil spirits in the desert sun. Rather it is spirituality for the “crowded ways of life.” And how we conduct ourselves in community does affect others.

Wesleyan Spiritual Theology Has a Magnetic Attraction to the Poor and Oppressed

Private piety that clings to Jesus and ignores the human agonies of the world is foreign to the Wesleyan spirit. As already demonstrated in this course, service to the poor, sick, and oppressed is as much a spiritual discipline as prayer to those who breathe the Wesleyan spirit.

Mutual Guidance, Accountability, and Encouragement Through Small Groups

“Christian Conference,” as Wesley called it, “is an essential part of the genius of the Wesleyan movement. God has given us to each other to strengthen each other’s hands,” Wesley taught. No spirituality can claim to be truly Wesleyan without this important emphasis.

The Church as Community

The church is not isolated individual Christians, but the community of faith is the new temple of the Lord. Wesley said that the only holiness he knew was social holiness. That is to say, worship and the spiritual life are matters of community, the church community, the Christian family, and the larger community in the world.

Prayer, Meditation, and Devotional Reading

These are always stressed in a truly Wesleyan spirituality. Wesley promoted private and public prayer and prayer meetings. He practiced and taught the use of written and extemporaneous prayer in private devotion and corporate worship.

Christian Service Is an Essential Spiritual Discipline

John Wesley declared that true Christianity brought with it a “hungering and thirsting to do good of every possible kind.” He believed that all Methodists wanted to “feed the hungry, cover the naked with a garment and give the poor a way of supplying their own wants for the time to come.” Living for others is the self-transcendence of Wesleyan-Holiness spirituality.

Self-examination and Self-knowledge

These are important elements in Wesleyan spirituality.

From Works, 8: 352.

From Works, 7: 286.

“Know your disease; know your cure,” Wesley often said.

Self-surrender and Self-transcendence the Key to Holy Living

The secret to the holy life is self-surrender, always has been, always will be. Wesley carefully taught full surrender, but not the destruction of the personality. God is not at war with our humanity. We surrender to His redeeming love; we do not try to give up being a self, a person.

Pure Hearts, Attitudes, and Motives

Wesley sought purity of intention, knowing that perfect performance was beyond all members of our fallen race. But the springs of the heart can be made pure and made to flow as a pure stream as far as intention, motive, and attitude are concerned.

Detachment from the World

Upward mobility is a “religion” for sinners. The theology of prosperity is the radical opposite of the Wesleyan ethos. We worship, love, and serve not the created, but the Creator.

Holiness, Christian Perfection as Love

Love is the essence of the holiness that Wesley taught. Not legalism or doctrinaire orthodoxy, but rather to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself is the path toward Christian perfection.

For Reflection and Discussion

Allow students to respond.

- 1. In terms of spiritual formation and Christian nurture the most “Wesleyan” thing that happens in the church I pastor or attend is . . .*
- 2. At what points is the social setting in which your work like or unlike that of John Wesley?*
- 3. The best idea about spiritual formation and the holy life that came to my mind during this lecture was . . .*
- 4. One idea in the lecture that I want to know more about is . . .*

5. *Evaluate the theme of "Radical Optimism" as a distinctive element of Wesleyan spirituality.*
6. *After considering the elements in Wesleyan spirituality, what part of it is the hardest for you to maintain in your own personal devotional life? in your church?*

Group Activity

(15 minutes)

Refer students to Resource 20-2.

In Base Groups or pairs have the students complete the activity.

While the students are working check the students' journals to see if they have been faithful to the assignment. Assure them that you will not be reading the specific entries.

Starting with the 20 characteristics of Wesleyan-Holiness spirituality given in Resource 20-1, plan a brochure that defines what your local Wesleyan-Holiness church is and does. The target audience could include

- unchurched people in your neighborhood whom your calling teams visit
- visitors to your church
- candidates for membership in your church who are in a membership training course.

The brochure will have four pages. Working together, plan each page. Plan the words and the graphics for the cover and for each of the other three pages. You may choose to design, instead of a brochure, an Internet website that introduces your church. Start with the 20 characteristics given in the lecture.

Evaluation: Looking Back

(25 minutes)

Before administering the evaluation document, Resource 20-3, lead the class in looking back over the course. Share with them the most meaningful moment for you. Then let them reflect informally on:

- *The high point of the course.*
- *What exercises worked best?*
- *What activities did not work for them?*
- *What were the strengths of the course and the experiences?*
- *The weaknesses?*
- *Would you recommend this course to a friend?*
- *After a few moments of discussion, ask students to fill out the evaluation form.*

Refer students to Resource 20-3.

Collect the evaluations at the end of the time.

Lesson Close

(5 minutes)

Review

*This whole lesson has been review.
Use this time to pull together loose
ends.*

*Be sure that you, the teacher, have
names, addresses, and e-mails.
Post course contact is valuable*

Homework Assignment

*Refer students to the Student
Guide.*

For a Lifetime

Commit to BE a student of God's grace.

Journal Prompt

Reflect on Philippians 3:10, "I want to know Christ
and the power of his resurrection."

*Be prepared to give out the
Certificates of Completion to those
who qualify.*

Punctuate the Finish

This module, hopefully, has prepared you to more adventures of the spirit, more unguessed blessings, and victories of grace. Going forward, take this prayer from Colomba, a sixth-century Irish missionary to Scotland. Put it in your spiritual backpack; you'll need the calories it provides soon enough.

Refer students to Resource 20-4.

O Lord,
Be thou a bright flame before me,
Be thou a guiding star above me,
Be thou a smooth path below me,
Be thou a kindly shepherd behind me.
Today—tonight—and forever.
Amen.

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