

Grace College and Seminary
Continuing Education Program in Women's Leadership Studies
STRETCHING MINDS, STRENGTHENING HEARTS, SHAPING HANDS.

Spiritual Formation

Course Description:

This course is devoted to helping the student specify and articulate some of the necessary avenues that lead the Christian toward greater intimacy with the Lord and toward greater maturity in the Christian walk. The course emphasizes the role of the Gospel in ongoing spiritual formation by promoting a sense of relational Christianity (as opposed to a performance-based Christianity) that is focused on appropriating Truth and yielding to the Spirit in love. The student will also have the opportunity to grow in the knowledge of self and the knowledge of God, two essential components for spiritual maturity. The role of the body of Christ will be explored, setting spiritual maturity in its proper relational context of community.

Vision for Spiritual Formation class:

I would love for learners to catch the vision that God is in charge of their spiritual formation, not their own effort or performance. I would like for them to know that the goal is union with God, not behavioral conformity to Christian standards or a behavioral sense of Christ-likeness, but Christ-likeness in a relational sense (how He related to the Father). I want learners to be released from a false sense of guilt (or a false sense of self-righteousness) that is connected to their performance, so that they can be freed up in Christ to live by truth in His love. I want participants to understand the role of truth, that it will set them free if they will learn to live by it (not just recite it or know it in their head). I want them to see that God's Word is transformational and His power is made perfect in our weakness. I also want them to know why they have besetting sins and what they can do to be freed up from these.

Learning Outcomes:

As a result in active engagement with the course material, you will be able to:

1. Define spiritual formation (maturity and growth) from a relational perspective.
2. Identify patterns of thinking that promote and hinder spiritual formation in your own life.
3. Understand the holistic nature of spirituality from a biblical and philosophical perspective.
4. Develop a theology of spiritual community that should define the dynamics of the Church.

Recommended Reading and Resources:

1. Spiritual Formation Lecture Series (highly recommended!):
www.biola.edu/spiritualformation/lecture/
2. Any of Larry Crabb's books, but especially *Inside Out*, *The Pressure's Off*, *Finding God*.
3. *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, Zondervan (by Peter Scazzero). I have my spiritual formation students read this and they love it! It's a powerful book on 6 principles of emotional health that correspond with spiritual maturity. This same author has a newer book out on this topic that is more for the individual and not just the church leader, but I think it all applies to everyone.
4. *True Faced*, DVD + Book by Leadership Catalyst. The opening DVD session is worth the price of the series. He sets up this great allegory for 2 types of spiritual formation. The one leads to hiding and putting on masks, the other leads to authenticity and relational growth with God. The rest of the DVD is a little less invigorating, but my students have all commented on the power of this opening session.
5. *How people grow*, Cloud and Townsend (enough said!)
6. *Renovation of the Heart* and *The Divine Conspiracy* by Dallas Willard (again, enough said!)
7. *Starting Well*, by Gordon Smith has been recommended reading to me that I have not yet tackled. It's more of a theological book on the sanctification process. But he is a well-known academic scholar in this area.
8. *The gift of being yourself*, and other books by David Benner have been highly recommended.
9. *The Search for significance*, an oldie but goodie, more along the lines of psychological processing of our true identity in Christ.
10. *Satisfy your soul*, Bruce Demarest, a clear presentation of the major spiritual disciplines and how they contribute to spiritual growth.
11. *Companions in Christ: A small group experience in Spiritual Formation*, Upper Room Books (Leader's Guide has group activities; Participant's Guide has daily assignments that are then used in the small group experience together)
12. *Gospel Transformation* (2nd Edition), World Harvest Mission. This is a workbook that Campus Crusade for Christ (now Cru) Staff highly recommended. Here's the book's message: "An approach to discipling that centers on the transformation of Christians by believing the Good News."
13. *Windows of the Soul* and *Intimate Moments with the Savior* both by Ken Gire. He is a very inspiring writer who doesn't systematically take you through the ins and outs of spiritual formation, but sees God in very profound ways through general revelation (*Windows of the Soul*) and special revelation (*Intimate Moments* series).
14. Foster, Prayer: *Finding the Heart's True Home*
15. Piper, *Counted Righteous in Christ*
16. Pettit, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation*
17. Chan, Simon *Spiritual Theology*

18. Other authors to read include:

Classic Authors

Augustine	John Owen
Blaise Pascal	Fenelon
Francis of Assisi	John Calvin
Thomas Aquinas	Martin Luther
Thomas a Kempis	Andrew Murray
Aelred of Rievaulx	
St. John of the Cross	
Teresa of Avila	
Brother Lawrence	
Jonathan Edwards	

Contemporary Authors

A.W. Tozer	Brennan Manning
Bonhoeffer	Ruth Haley Barton
C.S. Lewis	Gordon Smith
G.K. Chesterton	J.I. Packer
Richard Foster	John Piper
Frederick Buechner	Bruce Demarest
Simon Tugwell	Calvin Miller
Alan Jones	James Houston
Ken Boa	Henri Nouwen
David Benner	Eugene Peterson
Miles J. Stanford	Jennifer Kennedy-Dean

Course Overview:

Prerequisites: None

Requirements for obtaining CEU credit:

Active participation in class discussion is a vital part of your personal growth and integration of course content. Please come to class ready to interact not only with the course material, but also with your fellow classmates. We will be using our Bibles to investigate the sanctification process and the journey of spiritual formation found in His inerrant Word. Bring your favorite translation of Scripture (I recommend NASB, ESV, NIV, NKJV) and a way to record your thoughts (pencil, pen, laptop). Handouts of powerpoint presentations and extra paper will be provided for you. You must be present for all 10 hours of instruction in order to receive 1 credit toward the CEU certification program.