

SYLLABUS, Fall 2008

MB Biblical Seminary
PM 630, Spiritual Formation, Two Credit Hours
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This course will meet on Wednesday evenings, beginning September 17 and continuing until December 10, from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Course Description

The course will focus on personal and corporate spiritual growth through gaining head knowledge and heart experience. Students will be invited to explore their own spiritual formation as well as experience modes of formation from Christian traditions of spirituality. Paul's letter to the Ephesians will be a primary biblical text. Students will be invited to regular spiritual practice and should be willing to try a variety of spiritual practices. The course seeks to demonstrate the interrelatedness of self care and ministry. The implication of spiritual formation for the church and for one's ministry will be explored.

Course Objectives

1. To develop an awareness and understanding of spiritual formation and a growing personal intimacy with the living God.
2. To learn and practice some personal spiritual practices with the intention of integrating those which are beneficial into one's own life.
3. To explore the movement of God's Spirit in one's life and to share aspects of that movement in a supportive community setting.
4. To understand the biblical foundations for personal wholeness and transformation in Christ and toward Christ-likeness in daily living.
5. To reflect on the importance of encouraging spiritual formation in the lives of Christian believers and explore approaches to incorporating it into ministries in the Church.

Learning Outcomes

The following learning outcomes will be addressed and should be enhanced through this course. These are taken from the seminary's description of anticipated student outcomes.

- 1. Demonstrate commitment to live as a disciple of Jesus in Christian community**

- 1.1 Practice spiritual disciplines that promote maturing authentic discipleship
 - 1.1.1 Practice such personal spiritual disciplines as journaling, daily prayer, Bible reading, silence, solitude, fasting
 - 1.1.2 Demonstrate balance in time management, giving evidence of appropriate boundaries of work, study, family and friends, play
- 1.2 Demonstrate self-awareness that promotes maturing, authentic humanity
 - 1.2.1 Establish habits of physical and emotional self-care
 - 1.2.3 Practice integrity and ethical behavior in personal and professional relationships

4. Practice leadership skills in Pastoral Ministry

- 4.1 Proclaim the gospel message through words and deeds with the purpose of leading all people to faith in Jesus Christ and into a relationship with the church
 - 4.1.1 Declare God's love for all people in biblically faithful and culturally appropriate expressions of words and deeds, inviting those outside the church to respond in faith to God's love in Christ and to join the local church.
 - 4.1.3 Encourage members of the congregation to live Christianly where they work, live and play so that the church scattered proclaims the gospel message in word and deed

Required texts

Jones, Tony. *The Sacred Way: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life*. Zondervan, 2005, 200 pp.

Peterson, Eugene H. *Christ Plays In Ten Thousand Places: A Conversation in Spiritual Theology*. Eerdmans, 2005. 353 pages.

Willard, Dallas. *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. Nav Press, 2002. 268 pages.

Course Outline

The following themes will be covered in lecture and discussion. In addition, specific spiritual disciplines will be introduced, explained and practiced.

What is Spiritual Formation
 Facing God's Truth About Ourselves
 Spiritual Dynamics of Inner Transformation
 The Holy Spirit and Renewal of the Heart
 Transformation By the Renewal of the Mind
 Spiritual Formation of Our Emotions
 Spiritual Formation and Counseling
 Growing Through a Community of Love

Spiritual Friendship & Spiritual Direction
 Spiritual Warfare in Formation
 Hearing the Voice of God (Listening Prayer)
 Spiritual Formation and Work/Ministry—Balance of Life
 Renewal of Marriage and Family
 Transforming God’s People: SF in the Local Church

Class time will include:

Guided Meditation
 Class Lecture and discussion
 Student Presentations from assigned reading
 Prayer practices and spiritual disciplines, practice and reflection

Course Requirements.

1. Attendance at all sessions, arriving on time, mastering assigned reading and participating actively with colleagues in spiritual practices, reflection and discussion.
2. All students will be required to keep a spiritual journal, reflecting on their spiritual experiences, **due every class session**. The journal may be kept daily or written weekly. In the journal, the student should keep a record of God-moments, their response to God, their reading and meditation, and their personal or group growth experiences. Guidelines for journaling will be given at the first class session. The journal may be handwritten or typed, as long as it is legible.
3. Write a spiritual autobiography reflecting formative experiences of your life. Trace early influences, significant persons and defining moments, recounting the outer facts, but reflecting on the inner meaning and why it was formative. The journal should indicate a depth of insight into personal experiences rather than be simply a summary or listing of those experiences. How did this impact your personal experience of the Lord? 4-6 pages double spaced. **Due October 22 by the end of class.**
4. Each student will be required to lead a class discussion on one or more chapters of the book by Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*. A sign up sheet will be distributed at the first class session. The student will summarize the salient points of the chapter(s) assigned, and will lead the class in discussing the following questions:
 - a. What is the author’s purpose in this reading? What does he intend us to gain?
 - b. How are his main points developed and supported?
 - c. Is he convincing? That is, in what ways do you think the author makes sense? Do you find significant disagreement or have serious questions?
 - d. My own response to this chapter is to (Note: the response can be intellectual (something you think), affective (something you feel) or practical (something you will do).

5. In addition to the class texts, the student is required to read an additional 500 pages from a bibliography distributed by the instructor. Also included are the Spiritual Classics listed by Tony Jones on page 221-222. Any books requested for this additional reading that are not on these lists must have specific permission from the instructor to be counted toward the total. For each book read, the student will submit a **two to three page report** stating the author and title of the book, along with the number of pages read. Describe the central idea or thesis of the book and interact with it in a meaningful way, using the following sentences as guidelines. **State the idea.** Analyze it. Is it tenable? Does it make sense? Can it be proved? Is it biblical? **Critique it.** What is missing in that thesis? What should have been covered or considered but was not? **Apply it.** If you believe and act on what that author describes, what difference will it make in your life? Your family? Your ministry? **Note: do not simply review the content of the book. Analyze it. The first book review is due November 5, 2008 by the end of class. The second (if necessary) is due November 19, 2008 by the end of class. Any subsequent reviews are due December 3, 2008 by the end of class.**
6. Write a final **integrating** paper utilizing required reading, classroom lecture and discussion, spiritual practices, and journaling. This assignment asks you to describe how you will use what you have learned in this course in your future personal growth and also in your public ministry. Things you may want to address can include but are not limited to the following:
- How has your understanding of spiritual formation changed?
 - How has your experience of God's presence in your life been enriched?
 - How does the Bible inform your understanding of spiritual formation?
 - What "rule of life" or particular spiritual practices are incorporated into your life? How do you practice these? What are you learning as you do?
 - As a leader or participant in a ministry experience, how will you encourage the formation of those to whom you minister. **Be specific here. Do not write in generalities.**
 - You may choose an artistic way to address these issues. Make certain that the explanation you provide clearly demonstrates the link between the artistic medium and the issues. **This paper is due December 10 by the end of class. Please hand in hard copy rather than electronic.**

Topic and Reading Schedule

Sept. 17 Get acquainted; Class reading and requirements;
Introduction to Spiritual Formation
 Exercise: Meditation on Scripture

Sept. 24 **Discerning God's Movement in One's Life**
 Reading: *Ephesians* chapters 1-3
 Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, chapters 1-2

Jones, *The Sacred Way*, chs. 1& 3
 Exercise: Silence

- Oct. 1 **Facing God’s Truth About Ourselves**
 Reading: *Ephesians* chapters 4-6
 Willard, ch. 3
 Jones, ch. 2
 Exercise: Silence, Confession & Repentance
- Oct. 22 **Spiritual Dynamics of Inner Transformation**
 Reading: *Ephesians* 3:14- 5:2
 Willard, ch. 4
 Jones, ch. 4
 Exercise: *Lectio Divina*
 Spiritual Biography due
- Oct. 29 **Transformed By the Renewal of the Mind**
 Reading: Willard, ch. 6
 Jones, chs. 2, 5
 Peterson, pp. 1-45
 Exercise: Affirmation; Praying the Scriptures
- Nov. 5 **Spiritual Formation of Emotions**
 Reading: Willard, ch 7
 Jones, ch. 6
 First Reading Report due
- Nov. 12 **Note: Schedule for the remainder of course TBA October 1**
- Nov. 19
- Dec. 3
- Dec. 10

Grading

Meeting the course requirements satisfactorily, as outlined above, will generally result in a grade of “B.” A higher grade will require a higher quality in writing and reflection.

Grading is weighted as follows:

Attendance, on time, class participation	10%
Journaling	15%
Spiritual biography	15%
Reviews of additional reading	15%
Leading discussion of Willard book	20%
Integrative paper	25%

All work submitted after the due date may be reduced in grade.

Work submitted with excessive spelling or grammatical errors will be reduced in grade.

The student will have the option to rewrite and resubmit.

Academic Policies

Academic Policies. MBBS academic policies (as well as other school policies) are described at <http://www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies/>. These policies provide guidance on academic integrity and plagiarism, accommodation for disabilities, incomplete course work, extensions, dates for changing registration, non-discriminatory and inclusive language, appeals, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with these policies and will be held responsible for adhering to them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to you or to a situation that you face in your studies, please speak to the professor or consult the Registrar.

Course evaluations are to be completed online and are due one week after the completion of the course. Official grades will not be posted until the student's evaluation of the course is completed.

Confidentiality

Students who wish to have their work kept confidential should submit it in an envelope and it will be returned in the same way. Our classroom times will also constitute a covenant community and confidentiality guidelines will be reviewed on the first day of class.

Bibliography

Will be distributed in class.