



WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS

Spiritual Formation Questions for Jan. 14

Whitney Chapter 1

1. What is the purpose of the Spiritual Disciplines?
What Scripture verses support this assertion?
2. What are the three primary catalysts for changing us and conforming us to Christlikeness?
Explain how God uses each one in our lives.
3. What biblical evidence, especially in the life of Christ, is there to support the idea that we must be continually practicing the Spiritual Disciplines?

Foster Intro & Chapter 1

1. Is willpower the means of overcoming slavery to ingrained habits?
Explain why or why not utilizing Scriptural support?
2. What danger is there in beginning the Spiritual Disciplines?
Explain the chasm of moralism and antinomianism, which the Disciplines of the spiritual life must steer between (cf p. 8).

Reading Check

What percentage of the reading did you do? Circle one of the following: 100% 75% 50%

Spiritual Formation Questions for Jan. 21

1. Memorize a psalm of your choosing and recite it to a classmate.
Have them sign your sheet affirming your successful completion (if a fellow classmate is unavailable, another Heritage student will be accepted, or if that is unavailable(!) then another witness will be accepted).

Whitney Chap. 2 & 3

1. "... the worst dust storm in history would happen if all church members who were neglecting their Bibles dusted them off simultaneously." Do you think this statement accurately reflects the state of Bible reading in the Church today? Why or Why not?
2. What are the three practical suggestions for consistent success in Bible Reading? What is the main reason we don't succeed?
3. What are the benefits of scripture memorization?
4. What practical steps help ensure your ability to memorize scripture effectively?

Reading Check

What percentage of the reading did you do? Circle one of the following: 100% 75% 50%

Spiritual Formation Questions for Jan. 28

Whitney Chapter 3 & 4

1. What scriptural evidence is there to support the need for meditation?
2. Why is meditation even more crucial in today's age than it was in Biblical times or even during the lives of the Puritans?
3. What Scripture verses emphasize our duty to frequent prayer?
4. Why do so many believers not pray?
5. What is the missing link between Bible intake and prayer? How does it connect them?

Foster Chapter 2 & 3

1. What are the major differences between Christian meditation and that of the Eastern religions?
2. What role does the imagination play in meditation?
3. What are the four major forms of Christian meditation?
4. Foster says that we weaken our prayers when we are obsessed with always adding "If it be thy will." What do you think?
5. "Prayer is to religion what original research is to science." Discuss.

6. What role does the imagination play in prayer?

Reading Check

What percentage of the reading did you do? Circle one of the following: 100% 75% 50%

Spiritual Formation Questions for Feb. 4

Fasting

1. Abstain from food for one day, drinking only water (if you have medical reasons you may do a "fruit juice fast" or if more serious replace the fast with 4 more hours of silence). Sign here _____ if you completed this exercise.

Whitney Ch. 9

1. What are the different types of fasts, what are their characteristics, and what biblical evidence supports these distinctions?
2. What are the various reasons we may undertake a fast for?

Foster Ch. 4

1. Is fasting a commandment? Why or why not?

Silence & Solitude

1. For two 1 hr periods practice absolute silence and solitude. Sign here _____ if you completed this exercise.

Whitney Ch. 10

1. For what reasons do we practice silence and solitude?
2. What practical suggestions to help accomplish these disciplines does Whitney offer?

Foster Ch. 7

1. What is "the Dark Night of the Soul"?
2. What are some steps into solitude?

Reading Check

What percentage of the reading did you do? Circle one of the following: 100% 75% 50%

Spiritual Formation Questions for Feb. 11

Whitney Chapter 8

1. What scripture verses support the assertion that we are obligated to use our time wisely?
2. What is your most significant time-wasting (in)activities? Draft and submit a week schedule which would force you to discipline yourself in these areas by (e)limi(na)ting these activities. Begin implementing the schedule for this week and explain the effect it has had.
3. What biblical material do you think is most important for principles concerning stewardship of your finances?
4. What is your biggest failing in trying to be a good steward of your money? How can you practically rectify this?

Foster 6

1. What dominical sayings (i.e. words from "our Lord" Jesus) most strongly urge simplicity in our lives?
2. What is the central point for the discipline of simplicity? Elaborate.
3. What are the three attitudes that characterize freedom from anxiety?
4. What are the ten practical principles Foster outlines for living simply?
5. Create a top ten list of the practical steps you will take to obey the Lord's command to live simply.

Reading Check

What percentage of the reading did you do? Circle one of the following: 100% 75% 50%

Spiritual Formation Questions for Feb. 25

1. As suggested by Foster (p. 71) read through either Ephesians or 1 John in their entirety each day this week. Keep a journal of your discoveries and how it impacted your prayer and spiritual life.
2. Have you journaled before? What procedure best works for you? Do you feel this discipline would increase your relationship with God?

3. Do you find the theological study you engage at in classes at Heritage to be a help or hindrance to your spiritual walk? How can you approach your academic life as part and parcel of your spiritual life?

Reading Check

What percentage of the reading did you do? Circle one of the following: 100% 75% 50%

Spiritual Formation Questions for Mar. 4

1. Attend a worship service. Describe it in detail. How did it facilitate your personal spiritual formation? What changes do you think would maximize the experience of Worship for the entire community?
2. How do you best worship God? What hinders you from worshipping God?
3. Has your spiritual discipline been accompanied thus far by a feeling of celebration and gaiety (Foster, 191)?
4. How can joy come through obedience?
5. What steps does Foster mention to encourage the Practice of Celebration?

Reading Check

What percentage of the reading did you do? Circle one of the following: 100% 75% 50%

Spiritual Formation Questions for Mar. 11

1. What Scriptural injunctions cause Foster to declare confession a necessary discipline for all Christians?
2. What three things are necessary for a good confession according to St. Alphonsus Liguori? Explain what each of these things entails.
3. What type of people do we look for in order to practice confession? How do we find them?
4. How does a group of Christians go about asking for corporate guidance together?
5. How does a Spiritual Director lead? What dangers are there in such spiritual mentorship?

Reading Check

What percentage of the reading did you do? Circle one of the following: 100% 75% 50%

Spiritual Formation Questions for Mar. 18

Submission and Serving

Foster Chapter 8

1. How can the discipline of submission be paradoxically seen as a form of freedom?
2. Describe what Foster refers to as "revolutionary subordination". What role did it play in the life of teaching of Jesus and the Apostles?
3. What are the different acts of submission we are called to as Christians?

Foster Chapter 9

1. What differences are there between self-righteous service and true service?
2. How would you answer a person who says that the emphasis on service allows Christians to be taken advantage of?
3. Describe the different forms of service and how they can lead to progression in our spiritual lives.

Whitney Chapter 7

1. What two deadly sins are especially disdainful of serving?
2. What motives are expected to distinguish godly forms of service?
3. What are your spiritual gifts? How can you practice the discipline of service in order to make your gifts better available to the Body of Christ?

Reading Check

What percentage of the reading did you do? Circle one of the following: 100% 75% 50%

Spiritual Formation Questions for Mar. 25

Whitney Ch. 6 pp. 99-144

1. What scriptural support does Whitney cite to support his contention that evangelism is expected of every Christian? Do you agree or disagree with this assertion?
2. What is success in evangelism?

3. What is the difference between witnessing by design and witnessing by default?
4. Describe your current practice of the discipline of evangelism; include the most recent incidents in which you have shared your faith with a non-believer. What are the major things which block you from practicing this discipline more often? How can you ensure you practice this discipline more consistently?

Reading Check

What percentage of the reading did you do? Circle one of the following: 100% 75% 50%

Spiritual Formation Questions for Apr. 1

Spiritual Formation Meditation

For this final assignment I want you to read "The Life of Antony" by the famous St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria. Athanasius was largely responsible for the Nicene Creed and thus the Orthodox Trinitarian faith as we have come to know it. His story is of an ancient holy man, Antony, who inspired generations to live a life of spiritual discipline; a fitting conclusion to this class.

LIFE OF ANTONY: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf204.xvi.i.html>

Questions On The Life Of Antony

1. What percentage of the reading did you do? Circle one of the following: 100% 75% 50%
2. What spiritual disciplines did Antony practice and were the results?
3. What did you personally draw from the story in terms of spiritual formation?
4. What elements caused you discomfort either because they are obviously outdated, unbelievable, or theologically incorrect?
5. Do you think there is still a place for those who permanently draw away from society for constant prayer? Why or why not?
6. What is the "natural state" of the soul that Antony speaks of? How is it attained? (see paragraphs 14, 20, 34)
7. Lastly, slowly meditate upon and pray the words of this most ancient prayer for the practice of Lent. What did you personally discover during your meditation on this text?

The Great Lenten Prayer of St Ephraim:

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despondency, lust for power and idle talk.

(Prostration)

But grant unto me, Thy servant, a spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love.

(Prostration)

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see mine own faults and not to judge my brothers and sisters. For blessed art Thou unto ages of ages. Amen.

(Prostration)

O God, cleanse Thou me a sinner.

(12 times, with as many bows, and then again the whole prayer from the beginning throughout, and after that one great prostration)

Personal Growth Inventory for Apr. 1

This assignment is for your personal reflection and prayer. It is not to be handed in or submitted for marking.

It is meant to help you evaluate and assess your spiritual growth over the semester as well as help you understand further areas of need. The questions have been shaped by the outline of the course and biblical principles.

1. Have I entered into a relationship with Jesus, or am I just toying with spirituality?

It all starts here. Spirituality is not some feel-good buffet where you get to choose what makes you feel spiritual. It's a life of repentance that acknowledges Jesus as Lord and surrenders wholly to Him. He is the Doorway to eternal life and everything else is just a sham.

2. Am I learning to live each day in the light of Christ and His teachings?

Jesus said, "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). The context of that statement is very important because its preceded by Jesus saying, "You are my disciples if you hold to my teachings." It's being a disciple who follows the teachings of Jesus where truth and freedom are found. So, do I thirst for the Scriptures? Do I long to commune with Christ through prayer and meditation and is my heart open to being conformed to His likeness?

3. Am I able to look back on my past, without it ruling my present?

How many believers are still caught up in relational hurts from the past? As believers, do we really embrace the fact that we are new creations and have been given victory over those areas of our lives. It's not that we ignore them or deny them, or even acknowledge what we can learn from them, but Christ has cleansed us from their lingering effects.

4. Am I filled with faith, hope, and love, and live without anger, greed, guilt, envy, or thoughts of revenge?

Do we remain in a state that just cycles bad behaviour without being transformed? The apostle Paul spoke of removing these bad behaviours but he never advocated for just leaving a vacuum. Instead, he encouraged us to replace them with the fruits of the Spirit.

5. Am I secure and at peace with who I am in Christ?

I can't tell you how many people come to me just hoping to gain some peace in their lives. Peace that passes all understanding is a by-product of spiritual health (Phil 4:7). We tend to find our personal value in what we do or who we are related to, as opposed to who we already are as Christ followers and children of God.

6. Do I love the unlovable, give hope to the hopeless, friendship to the friendless, and encouragement to the discouraged?

The way we interact with others is a huge testament to the working of the Spirit in your life. When someone asked Jesus what the greatest commandment was, he gave one that was obvious, to love God, but surprised him with a second. To love others which was as equally important as the first. We simply cannot say we love God if we do not reflect the heart of Christ to others.

7. Am I able to look back in forgiveness, forward in hope, with gratitude to God?

Let's be honest, forgiveness is a big deal. We all struggle with it to one degree or another. But here is the rub. When we don't forgive, it holds us hostage to the past and impedes our ability to view tomorrow through hopeful eyes. Without that ability it is seldom easy to thank God. Further, we are least like Jesus when we don't forgive, and we are most like Him when we do.

8. Am I able to recognize, develop, and use my God-given physical, mental, and spiritual abilities to the glory of God and for the benefit of others?

There is a problem with most modern definitions of discipleship. They tend to think in individualistic terms. Growing in Christ is not exclusively a self-help and self-improvement exercise. It's for the sake of others. A spiritual gift is not for your benefit. It's for the benefit of others and for the glory of God. If you consider discipleship in any other way you simply become a spiritual consumer, not a contributor.

9. Do I long for the Kingdom of God?

One of the key indicators of whether you long for God's Kingdom is in the way you pray. Do your prayers sound more like "help me, bless me, give me," or are they more like "may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven?"

10. Where does my ultimate trust lie?

To trust is to surrender and believe the best regardless of how things may appear. It's easy to take matters into our own hands, to try and fix it, or to manage our sin rather than repent before God. Life is essentially an exercise in faith – do we trust in our own self-reliance, or do we trust God with all that we are?

Those are my 10 key questions to help gauge your spiritual health. I think Jesus wants us to live lives of abundance and satisfaction, despite the darkness around us. In fact, it may be exactly what He was alluding to when He called us to be salt and light to the world.