



TYNDALE

• SEMINARY •

Course Syllabus

Fall 2012

SPIRITUAL FORMATION
SPIR 0700

SEPT. 13 – DEC. 6, 2012
SECTION 1 THURSDAY 1 – 3:50 PM
SECTION 2 THURSDAY 6:30 – 9:20 PM

INSTRUCTOR: REV. DR. DAVID SHERBINO
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To access your course material, please go to <http://www.mytyndale.ca>

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an integrated study of the Christian life and the development of personal character shaped by the values and virtues of God's kingdom. The course includes examination of conceptual frameworks and major categories in spiritual theology, as well as understanding and practicing the spiritual disciplines through the use of personal as well as corporate disciplines.

Included in this course is a 2-day retreat which all participants must attend. The retreat begins at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 7 and ends at 4 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 9 at Queen of the Apostles Renewal Centre. The cost for the retreat is \$180.00.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the completion of this course students will be able to:

- 1) Recognize the foundational Biblical nature of Christian spirituality.
- 2) Recognize that spiritual formation is a dynamic process of “being” initiated by the Holy Spirit and to reflect on that process, and understand that one is being rooted and grounded in Christ for the sake of loving others.
- 3) Develop an understanding of the spiritual disciplines and begin to integrate them into their daily activity so that one becomes fully actualized in their Christian life.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS

Foster, Richard. *Prayer. Finding the Heart's True Home*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

Holt, Bradley. *Thirsty For God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2005.

Nouwen, Henri. *Genessee Diary: Report from a Trappist Monastery*. Rev'd ed. New York: Doubleday, 1981.

Sherbino, David. *Re-Connect. Spiritual Exercises to Develop Intimacy with God*. Salt Creative

Group, 2008.

Willard, Dallas. *Spirit of the Disciplines*. New York: HarperCollins, 1991.

B. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Attendance - Participation

Due to the nature of the course, each member is expected to attend all lectures and to participate fully in the practical dimension. **If you miss more than 20% of the classes, you are not eligible for a pass in the course.**

2. Spiritual Exercises: Due on Nov.1, 2012; 20% of Final Grade

You are required to read a chapter each week from Sherbino, *Re – Connect Spiritual Exercises to Develop Intimacy with God*, and do the exercises in preparation for weekly interaction. Include a statement indicating what percentage of work you did.

3. Assigned Reading: Due on Nov. 29, 2012; 10% of Final Grade

Read the following books and submit a page, noting those you have read and the percentage read.

Willard, Dallas. *Spirit of the Disciplines*.

Nouwen, Henri. *Genessee Diary*.

Foster, Richard. *Prayer*.

Holt, Bradley. *Thirsty For God*.

4. Spiritual Direction Reflection Paper: Nov. 29, 2012; 20% of Final Grade

Each participant will have a spiritual director provided by the seminary. You are required to meet every two weeks for focused conversation and prayer. Keep a journal of your meetings and record your reflections, insights, and struggles. A three page reflection paper integrating what has been helpful from your reading of Foster's *Prayer* and the impact it had on your prayer life as discussed with your spiritual director, is to be handed in at the end of the course. You must meet with your spiritual director for a minimum of six sessions. You must indicate in your paper the number of times you have actually met.

5. Short Essay: Due on Sept. 27, 2012; 15% of Final Grade

Submit a four page essay describing your past and current understanding and practice of Christian spirituality. Integrate the concepts and categories explained in Holt's *Thirsty for God*. Some helpful questions to guide the organization of your essay would be:

- a. Which specific traditions or faith communities have shaped your spirituality? What do you see as strengths and weaknesses of your tradition?
- b. What key theological beliefs have shaped your spirituality?
- c. What personal or corporate practices of the Christian faith are most important to you?
- d. What area of personal spiritual growth would you like to pursue?

6. Retreat and Reflection Paper: Due Nov. 22, 2012; 15% of Final Grade

(Cost \$180.00) The retreat will be an opportunity to practice and experience some of the spiritual disciplines in a guided fashion. At the end of the retreat, you will write a three page paper reflecting on your experience. In this paper try to identify with the experiences of Henry Nouwen in *Genessee Diary*. In particular, focus on the issues of silence, solitude, community, and worship

7. Integration Paper: Due on Dec. 6, 2012; 20% of Final Grade

Write a five page integration paper on the lectures, daily spiritual exercises in *Re-Connect* and the readings, to reveal the ways you have been challenged to integrate the academic and spiritual, components. Use Dallas Willard's *Spirit of the Disciplines* to provide you with a theological framework for this assignment.

C. COURSE CONTENTS: THEMES

1. Biblical and Theological Foundations of Christian Spirituality
2. Spiritual Friendship
3. Holy Reading Lectio Divina
4. Prayers of the Heart
5. Dreams and Visions...God's Messengers
6. Silence and Solitude

7. Spiritual Formation and the Community of Faith
8. The Church Year and Spiritual Formation
9. Sabbath Rest
10. Rule of Life
11. Discernment

D. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Late papers are penalized 10% per week.

Extension without penalty is granted in cases of a death in the family or personal illness. In the case of illness there must be a doctor’s certificate. All requests must be submitted prior to the due date of the assignment.

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students should consult the current *Academic Calendar* for academic polices on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System. The Academic Calendar is posted at <http://tyndale.ca/registrar/calendar>.

E. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Short Essay; Due Sept 27	15%
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Spiritual Exercises; Due Nov. 1	20 %
Retreat Reflection Paper; Due Nov. 22	15%
Assigned Reading; Due Nov. 29	10%
Spiritual Dir. Reflection Paper; Due Nov. 29	20 %
Integration Paper; Due Dec.6	20 %
Total Grade	100 %

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. CLASSICS OF DEVOTION

These are essential works which all serious devotees should read and read again.

Aelred of Rievaulx. *On Spiritual Friendship*. Tr. Mary E. Laker. Cistercian Publications, no. 5, 1974.

Baxter, Richard. *The Saints Everlasting Rest*. Abridged by Benjamin Fawcett. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1978.

Bernard of Clairvaux. *On Loving God*. Ed. Hugh Martin. London: Burns Oats and Washburne 1959; or tr. M. Basil Pennington, Cistercian Publications, no 13, 1973.

Boethius. *On the Consolations of Philosophy*. Penguin Classics.

Bonaventure. *The Character of a Christian Leader*. Tr. Philip O'Mara. Servant Books, 1978.

Bunyan, John. *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Ed. Roger Sharrock, 1976.

Charitan, Igumen, ed. *The Art of Prayer, An Orthodox Anthology*. Faber and Faber, 1976.

de Foucauld, Charles. *Meditations of a Hermit*. Tr. Charlotte Balfour, Burns and Oats, 1981.

de Sales, Francis. *Introduction to the Devout Life*. Tr. John K. Ryan. New York: Image, 1972.

de Caussade, Jean Pierre. *The Sacrament of the Moment*. Tr. Kitty Muggeridge. New York: Collins, 1981.

Francis of Assisi. *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*. Tr. Raphael Brown. New York: Image Books, 1958.

Herbert, George. *The Temple*. Ed. F.E. Hutchinson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.

Hilton, Walter. *The Stairway of Perfection*. Tr. M.L. Del Mastro. New York: Image, 1979.

John of the Cross. *Ascent of Mt Carmel*. 1958.

_____. *Dark Night of the Soul*. Tr. E. Allison Peers. 1959.

_____. *Living Flame of Love*. New York: 1962

Julian of Norwich. *The Revelations of Divine Love*. Tr. James Walsh, Harper and Brothers, 1961.

Kelly, Thomas R. *A Testament of Devotion*. New York: Harper and Row, 1941.

Law, William. *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973.

Lewis, C.S. *George MacDonald - an Anthology*. Collins.

Owen, John. *Temptation and Sin/Works*, vol 6. Banners of Truth, 1977.

Taylor, Jeremy. *The Rule and Exercise of Holy Living*. Ed. Ann Lamb. New York: Harper and Row, 1970.

Teresa of Avila. *The Interior Castle*. Tr. E. Allison Peers. New York: Image, 1961.

The Confessions of St Augustine. There are various editions such as John K. Ryan, Image Books, 1960, as F.J. Sheed, Sheed and Ward, 1943. Dramatic, modern translations have been made by Sherwood Wirts and Ray J Defarri.

Thomas a Kempis. *The Imitation of Christ*. Ed. Harold C Gardiner. New York: Image, 1955.

Weil, Simone. *Waiting for God*. Collins, 1977.

Wilberforce, William. *Real Christianity*. Ed. J.M. Houston. Multnomah Press, 1982.

William of St. Thierry. *On Contemplating God, Prayers, Meditations*. Tr. Sister Penelope, Cistercian Publications, no. 3, 1971.

_____. *The Golden Epistle*. Tr. Theodore Berkeley. Cistercian Publications, no. 12, 1971.

B. HISTORICAL SURVEYS OF SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS

Bouyer, Louis. *A History of Christian Spirituality*. New York: Seabury Press, 1963-9, vol. 3

Buther, Dom Cuthbert. *Western Mysticism, neglected chapters in the history of religion*. Constable, 1927.

Christensen, Bernard. *The Inward Pilgrimage*. Spiritual Classics from Augustine to Bonhoeffer. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976.

Davis, Kenneth Ronald. *Anabaptism and Asceticism*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1974.

Haller, William. *The Rise of Puritanism*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972.

Holmes, Urban T. *A History of Christian Spirituality*. New York: Seabury Press, 1980.

Jones, Rufus M. *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries*. New York: Macmillan, 1914.

Kirk, Kenneth E. *The Vision of God*. Langmans, Green, 1931.

McNeill, John T. *A History of the Cure of Souls*. Harper's Ministers, 1977.

Payne, Robert. *The Holy Fire: The Story of the Early Centuries of the Christian Church in the Near East*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980.

Pourrat, P. *Christian Spirituality*. Burns Oats, 3 vol., 1922-27.

Sheppard, Lancelot. *Spiritual Writers in Modern Times*. Hawthorn Books, 1967.

Thornton, Martin. *English Spirituality: an outline of ascetical theology according to the English paternal traditions*. London: S.P.C.K., 1963.

Underhill, Evelyn. *The Mystics of the Church*. Cambridge: James Clarke, 1975.

C. ANTHOLOGIES OF SPIRITUAL WRITINGS

Barbour, Hugh and Arthur Roberts. *Early Quaker Writings, 1650-1700*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973.

Battles, Ford Lewis. *The Piety of John Calvin*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978.

Fedotov, G.P. *A Treasury of Russian Spirituality*. Sheed and Ward, 1977.

Freemantle, Ann. *The Age of Belief: The Medieval Philosophers*. New American Library, Mentor Books, 1955.

Klassen, Walter. *Anabaptism in Outline*. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1981.

Reinhold, H.A. *The Soul Afire: revelations of the mystics*. New York: Image Books, 1973.

Thomas, I.D.E. *A Puritan Golden Treasury*. Bannary Truth, 1971.

Ward, Benedicta. *The Desert Christian, Sayings of the Desert Fathers*. Macmillan, 1975.

Williams, George H. and Angel M. Mergal. *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*. Westminster Press, 1967.

Studies in the Spirituality and Theology of Individuals

Auclair, Marcelle. *Saint Teresa of Avila*. Pantheon Books, 1953. (well documented, objective study of a real person)

Bettoni, Efrem. *St. Bonaventure*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966 (an Italian writer summarized the thought and spiritual character of Bonaventure)

Bolshakoff, Sergius. *Russian Mystics*. Cistercian Publications, 1966. (a biographical outline of little known mystics in the west)

Bordeaux, Henri. *Saint Francis de Sales: Theologian of Love*. Langmans, Green, 1929. (a frank book of his human qualities and short-comings, both of which qualified him to advise others)

Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo*. Faber and Faber, 1967. (a brilliant and incisive biography written in a secular frame)

Burnaby, John. *Amor Dei*. 1938. (a classic on Augustine's love of God)

Chesterton, G.K. *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Dumb Ox*. New York: Image, 1956. (a witty, shrewd study that captures the spirit of Aquinas)

- Dallimore, Arnold A. *George Whitefield*. Cornerstone Books, 2 vol., 1979. (exhaustive and inspiring life of a great man)
- Dessain, C.S. *The Spirituality of John Henry Newman*. Winston Press, 1977. (a study of the spiritual "wholeness" of life Newman sought)
- Freemantle, Anne. *Desert Calling*. Henry Holt and Co., 1969.
- Greaves, Richard L. *John Bunyan*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969. (Bunyan's thought exposed through Bunyan's Pilgrim)
- Guardini, Romano. *Pascal for our Time*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1960. (affective study on what happens to a man who believes in God)
- Goudge, Elizabeth. *Saint Francis of Assisi*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1959. (there are numerous, larger and more authoritative studies of Francis, but none are written more sympathetically and of personal application than this)
- Hoffman, Bengt R. *Luther and the Mystics*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976. (a rather dull study, re-examining Luther's spiritual experience and his relationship to the mystics, but there is little else available on this lively, human being)
- Johnston, William. *The Mysticism of the Cloud of Unknowing*. Anthony Clarke Books, 1978. (the first coherent theological study on this unknown author, with a preface by Thomas Merton on the nature and dangers of mysticism)
- Leclerc, Jean. *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Cistercian Spirit*. Cistercian Publications, 1976. (an authoritative description of the many-sided facets of this remarkable leader of the 12th century)
- Martin, Hugh. *Puritanism and Richard Baxter*. London: S.C.M., 1954. (there is a dearth of any lively biographies on the Puritans, so this is a rather dull description of a pastor)
- Peers, Allison E. *Spirit of Flame*. London: S.C.M., 1963. (a balanced study of the life and character of St John of the Cross)
- Richard, Lucien Joseph. *The Spirituality of John Calvin*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1976. (a catholic writer's appreciation of the spiritual environment and traditions in what Calvin developed)

Sanders, E.K. *Fenelon*. Langmans, Green, 1901. (a factual study of Fenelon, his friends and enemies, 1661-1715)

Toon, Peter and Smout. *John Charles Ryle*. Reines, 1976. (a matter of fact biography of an inspiring saint)

Tuttle, Robert G. *John Wesley, his life and theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978. (A passionate study of a passionate man)

D. SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Diverse theological traditions have provided the Christian with a rich range of perspectives. These are sub-divided to help the reader seek what is needed personally, and bracketed to explain their ecclesiastical bias.

General

Baggot, L.J. *Spiritual Priorities*. London: S.P.C.K., 1963. (Anglican print)

Bouyer, Louis. *Introduction to Spirituality*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1961. (R.C.)

Bruce, A.B. *The Training of the Twelve*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963. (Free Presbyterian)

Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline, The Path to Spiritual Growth*. New York: Harper and Row, 1978. (Evangelical Quaker)

Grou, J.N. *Manual for Interior Souls*. London: Burns and Oats, 1968. (French Jesuit)

Hardman, Oscar, ed. *The Christian Life*, vol. 1 Standard. London: S.P.C.K., 1951. (Anglican)

Hume, Basil. *Searching for God*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977. (R.C. Archbishop)

Israel, Martin. *Summons to Life, The Search for Identity Through the Spiritual*. Mowbrays, 1976. (Doctor and Anglican)

Lovelace, Richard F. *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1979. pp. 61-200. (Evangelical Presbyterian)

McNeile, A.H. *Devotion and Discipleship*. Heffer, 1936. (Anglican Theologian)

The Navigators. *Design for Discipleship*, 6 booklets. Nav. Press, 1977. (The Navigators)

Taize. *The Rule of Taize*. New York: Seabury Press, 1968. (R.C. ecumenist)

Specific Disciplines

I Love, Vulnerability and Compassion

Breault, Joseph L. *A Transformed Mind and Heart, becoming vulnerable and compassionate*. Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1978. (R.C. leader of a "Community of God's Love")

Kelsey, Martin T. *Caring. How can we love one another?* Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1981. (R.C. priest and counselor)

Mayeroff, Milton. *On Caring*. New York: Harper and Row, 1971. (a secular philosopher)

McNeill, Donald P. and others. *Compassion: Reflections on the Christian Life*. New York: Doubleday, 1982. (a joint study and meditation by three R.C. writers)

Nouwen, Henri J.M. *The Wounded Healer*. New York: Doubleday Image, 1979. (R.C. teacher of spirituality)

II Discernment, Prudence and Charity

Dubay, Thomas. *Authenticity, a Biblical Doctrine of Discernment*. Lake Orien: Dimension Books, 1976. (Marist father)

Pieper, Josef. *Prudence*. London: Faber and Faber, 1959. (Thomist philosopher)

_____. *Fortitude and Temperance*. London: Faber and Faber, 1959.

von Hildebrand, Dietrich. *In Defense of Purity*. Helicon, 1930. (R.C. ethicist)

III Freedom, Simplicity and Poverty of Spirit

Foster, Richard J. *Freedom of Simplicity*. New York: Harper and Row, 1981. (Evangelical Quaker)

Maloney, George A. *Jesus, Set Me Free! Inner Freedom through Contemplation*. Dimension Books, 1977. (Jesuit teacher)

Metz, Johannes Baptist. *Poverty of Spirit*. Newman Press, 1968. (R.C. theologian)

IV Humility

Pakenham, Frank, Earl of Longford. *Humility*. New York: Collins, Fontana, 1969. (R.C. layman and politician)

V Vowed Life and Devotion

Rahner, Karl. *Theological Investigations*, vol 3. New York: Seabury Press, 1976. pp. 105-128, 177-189, 321-354. (Jesuit theologian)

Van Kamm, Adrian. *The Vowed Life*. Dimension books, 1968. (R.C. priest and psychologist)

VI Fasting

Ross, Shirley. *Fasting: The Super Diet*. Sheldon Press, 1976. (medical and secular perspective)

VII Wonder and Worship

Brunner, Peter. *Worship - the Name of Jesus*. St. Louis: Concordia, 1968. (Lutheran theologian)

Carroll, James. *Wonder and Worship*. Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1970. (Paulist priest)

Keen, Sam. *Apology for Wonder*. New York: Harper and Row, 1969. (secular theologian)

Pieper, Josef. *In Tune with the World, a Theory of Festivity*. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973. (R.C. theologian)

_____. *Leisure. The Basis for Culture*. Chicago: St. Augustine's Press, 1998.

VIII Meditation and Prayer

There are innumerable books on this subject (see my other bibliography on Prayer) so this is highly selective.

Clowney, Edmund P. C.M. - *Christian Meditation*. Craig Press, 1979. (evangelical Presbyterian)

Forsyth, P.T. *The Soul of Prayer*. Independent Press, 1966. (evangelical theologian)

Herman, E. *Creative Prayer*. London: James Clarke, 1722. (wife of pastor)

Moschner, Franz M. *Christian Prayer*. B. New York: Herder, 1953. (R.C. priest)

Saliers, Don E. *The Soul in Paraphrase*. New York: Seabury Press, 1980. (ecumenical theologian)

E. SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Barry, William A., and Connolly, William J. *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*. New York: Seabury Press, 1982.

Edwards, Tilden H. *Spiritual Friend, Reclaiming the Gift of Spiritual Direction*. Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1980. (Anglican director)

Jones, Alan. *Exploring Spiritual Direction, An Essay on Christian Friendship*. New York: Seabury Press, 1982. (Anglican theologian)

Leech, Kenneth. *Soul Friend, the Practice of Christian Spirituality*. New York: Harper and Row, 1979. (Anglican priest)

F. OTHER EDIFYING BOOKS ON DIVINE TOPICS

Bloom, Anthony. *Living Prayer*. Langman and Todd, 1966. (an Orthodox bishop)

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Discipleship*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works, Vol. 4. Tr. B. Green, R. Krauss, trans. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001.

Boros, Ladislaus. *Pain and Providence*. Search Press, 1976. (R.C. writer)

Doherty, Catherine de Hueck. *Poustinia: Christian Spirituality of the East for Western Man*. Notre Dame: Ava Maria Press, 1975. (Orthodox contemplative)

Emery, Pierre-Yves. *The Communion of Saints*. London: Faith Press, 1966.

Evely, Louis. *Suffering*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1967. (Founder of Lay Fraternities of Charles de Foucoud in Belgium)

Donne, John. *Devotions*. Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1960. (17th century Anglican divine)

Hurnard, Hannah. *Hinds' Feet on High Places*. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1973. (an allegory of accepting the will of God)

Lewis, C.S. *A Grief Observed*. New York: Seabury Press, 1963.

L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Circle of Quiet*. New York: Seabury Press, 1979. (Anglican writer)

Macdonald, George. *Diary of an Old Soul*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975. (lyrics by a 19th c. Presbyterian)

Matz, Louise L., ed. *The Meditative Poem: an anthology of 17th century verse*. New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1963.

Neill, Stephen. *Christian Holiness*. Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1960. (Anglican bishop)

Nouwen, Henri J.M. *Reaching Out. The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*. New York: Doubleday, 1975. (R.C. spiritual director and writer)

Packer, James I. *Knowing God*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1973.

Ryle, J.C. *Holiness*. Cambridge: James Clarke, 1962. (Evangelical Anglican bishop)

Schaeffer, Edith. *Hidden Art*. Carol Stream: Tyndale, 1971. (explores creativity in the ordinary things of life)

Selye, Hans. *The Stress of Life*. Toronto: McGraw Hill, 1956. (medical study that is a classic on this subject)

Traherne, Thomas. *Centuries of Meditations*. London: Faith Press, 1975. (17th century metaphysical prose on joy)

Underhill, Evelyn. *The Spiritual Life*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1961. (Anglo-Catholic mystic)

von Hildebrand, Dietrich. *Transformation in Christ*. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973. (R.C. philosopher and ethicist)

G. ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, Diogenes. *Spiritual Theology*. Boston: Cowley, 1997.
- Chan, Simon. *Spiritual Theology*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1999.
- Clendenin, Daniel B. *Eastern Orthodox Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.
- Edwards, Jonathan. *Religious Affections: A Christian's Character before God*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishing, 1995.
- Harris, Mark. *Companions for Your Spiritual Journey*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1999.
- Huggett, Loye. *The Joy of Listening to God*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1986.
- Holt, Bradley. *Thirsty For God: A Brief History of Christian Spirituality*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1993.
- Lemopsulos, George, ed. *Let Us Pray to the Lord: A Collection of Prayers From the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Tradition*. Geneva: WLL Publishing, 1996.
- McGrath, Alister. *Christian Spirituality*. Molten, MA: Blackwell, 1999.
- Miller, Wendy. *Invitation to Presence: A Guide to Spiritual Discipline*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1995.
- Oswald, Roy M., and Otto Kroeger. *Personality Type and Religious Leadership*. Washington D.C: Alban Institute, 1988.
- Pagne, Leanne. *Listening Prayer: Learning to Hear God's Voice God Keep a Prayer Journal*. Grand Rapids: Basin 1994.
- Peace, Richard. *Spiritual Journaling: Recording Your Journey toward God*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1995.

- Peterson, Eugene. *Answering God: The Psalms as Tools For Prayer*. New York: Harper and Row, 1985.
- Peterson, Eugene. *Subversive Spirituality*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.
- Rice, Howard. *Reformed Spirituality: An Introduction For Believers*. Louisville: WJKP, 1991.
- Senn, Frank C. *Protestant Spiritual Traditions*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1986.
- Smith, Martin L. *The Word is Very Near You: A Guide to Praying With Scripture*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley, 1989.
- Stevens, Paul. *Disciplines of the Hungry Heart*. Vancouver: Regent, 1993.
- Thompson, Marjorie. *Soul Feast: Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*. Louisville: WJKP, 1995.
- Toon, Peter. *The Art of Meditating on Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.
- Tyson, John R. ed. *Invitations to Christian Spirituality: An Ecumenical Anthology*. New York: Oxford U. Press, 1997.
- Vest, Norvene. *No Moment Too Small: Rhythms of Silence, Prayer, and Holy Reading*. Boston: Cowley, 1994.
- Waddel, Helen. *The Desert Fathers*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998.
- Whitney, Donald S. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. Colorado Spring: NavPress, 1991.
- Whitney, Donald S. *Spiritual Disciplines within the Church*. Chicago: Moody, 1996.
- Willard, Dallas. *The Divine Conspiracy*. San Francisco: Harper, 1998.

A GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL READING

by J.M. Houston

Our lives are both private and public. But the pressures of our culture are to believe the public activities, duties and responsibilities are more important. Function then becomes more valued than being. Meanwhile, our souls get starved, and the inner person within us cries out for fulfillment of deeper needs. We long for a deeper, more real spiritual life. For we sense we are unauthentic when we are only professors and promoters in the shallows of life. We know that we must nourish this drive to know God.

This is the purpose of this reading list, not as a comprehensive list you must read, master and know, to have a "how-to kit for spirituality," but as suggestive of what might introduce you to the classics of faith and devotion, and to other helpful material. There is, however, an art in devotional reading that is not exegetical, not informational, nor literary in its emphasis. For spiritual reading is essentially formative of the soul before God. We need then to read this devotional literature in such a way that it helps us be inspired and in tune with God, in "the inner man." It is writing which turns us heavenward, and is formative of our character in Christ.

Curiously, however, in spite of the spate of new books and reprints of this spiritual literature, there is little guidance offered how the art of spiritual reading can and should be cultivated. The following guidelines are suggested to help you focus on this art.

First Guideline

Spiritual reading requires a primary emphasis on the devotional use of Scripture. So not allow the excitement of entering into devotional literature detract you from the priority you give to Bible study and meditation on the Scriptures. For remember, the Scriptures are the canon of the devotion of God's people, who saw the Scriptures as God's revelation, as guided by the Holy Spirit.

Devotional reading by theological students is made difficult by the admixture of methods used. This mixture is inevitable, and not bad, provided we slowly begin to allow the text to speak to us personally, rather than being detached from it as abstraction, more information or more hypothetical knowledge.

Second Guideline

Growing in the art of devotional reading is less a matter of techniques and more a matter of attitudes of heart. It is like developing "a sixth sense," of reading interiorly, as distinct from

reading to others, informing them or teaching them. So the changed attitude is from seeking information and know how, to being inspired and transformed. Devotional reading is more dwelling on meanings about life. The former looks for transparency, and the latter is content to contemplate mysteries. Again, informational reading is more dialectical and comparative, where logic is important. But devotional reading is more docile and receptive, rather than critical and comparative.

Again informational reading tends toward being dissective, taking data to pieces by analysis, in order to increase erudition. But devotional reading is more living and dynamic, seeking to relate the material given into living situations. For this reason, devotional reading is more personal, allowing the reader to interpret its insights in such personal forms of assimilation as a spiritual journal and the practice of prayer. In these ways, the effects of interior reading are personalized and deepened, to affect and shape character, nourish the soul, and permeate the whole of one's life.

Third Guideline

Devotional reading is an art gained by facilitating conditions and circumstances, rather than by cognitive techniques. It is God's grace which alone prompts us to have any desires for God, and therefore any thirst for spiritual literature. Since we cannot invent, create or refashion "facilitating conditions" for our own sanctity, or become better listeners to God's guiding Word, "facilitating conditions and circumstances" are those which help remove obstacles to the action of grace.

In the history of the Church, as well as in the history of the soul, we experience "the desert" as such a facilitating condition. We feel "the desert within" of loneliness, "the desert outside" of relationships. Desert silence and solitude may be an experience. We re-learn the priorities and essentials of life in the spiritual experiences of the desert. We discover new dimensions there of self knowledge. We need patience, fortitude, and acceptance of desert suffering. We discover dependence and need of God in new ways. There, we reverse the worldly values of self-reliance towards dependence upon God, the dynamic of spiritual life.

A re-awakening of the consciousness of indwelling sin in the believer, and a sensitivity to the reality of Satan also drive us to our knees. We discover the great Puritan classics on the pathology of the heart, its deceptions, its hiddenness, its inaccessibility to our control. Temptation is a constant reality, requires a more watchfulness, alerted by the writings of those experiences in its subtleties. Repentance becomes a lived reality that needs support and comfort.

A desire to re-set our course in life, after failure and dishonesty with our soul, intensifies our search to learn how others have done so. Spiritual restoration is not seen as a return to the status quo, but as a radical change in direction into unknown territory, where we can walk "more by faith than by sight." Seeing life with deeper meaning calls for much greater spiritual resources than we ever imagined previously we would need.

Such deeper surrender to the will and purpose of God, after the defeat of self-will, creates longing in the soul for inner peace, spiritual gentleness, serenity, and spiritual refreshment. A deeper understanding and experience of the love of God, creates a desire to build up covenant relations in friendships that embody the reality of God in social relationships. Moved by God's grace and compassion, we look below the marred and shattered forms of human relations, to the potentials of redemption.

Fourth Guideline

Devotional reading has its own pace of assimilation, just as the speedy insights of the mind, or the transformation of thought into action, or the assimilation of deed into character, have their relative paces. The motion toward Godliness is the slowest pace of human actions. Unauthenticity occurs when we move too fast, inappropriate to the nature of the transformation. Devotional reading needs its own time, that is not determined by the academic calendar, nor the impatience we have for "instant results." Spiritual classics cannot be read in one evening, like detective novels. Such slow motion requires a regular habit of fixed times for such devotional reading, and an unhurried leisure to learn the disciplines of meditation and contemplation.

Devotional reading requires also space in our lives. Literally, this may lead to the habit of a particular environment being developed - one spot in our room that locates an "altar" of devotion. Physically, it may require comfort, a particular chair, an accustomed posture, where we learn most readily to relax, and where the atmosphere is made for such exercises of devotion. Spaces are associated by activities, such as the library where we study, the lounge where we talk, the classroom where we learn. Devotional reading requires a quiet spot, habitually frequented in solitude.

Fifth Guideline

Choose the work you want to read devotionally carefully for the benefit of your own soul. Choose it then, possibly with the advise of others. Keep in mind that the book should be chosen to open the doors of perception for you in terms of new as well as existing needs and desires. An imitation of others may not be the best reason for your choice. Because its purpose is to nurture the unique conditions of your own life, individual choice is important. At the same time, bear in

mind books we reject today may be re-discoveries later because we are then ready for their insight.

Personal adoption of a book is also helped by marking the text. This may record our first reactions to what we read, of approval, of help, or of questioning and rejection. It may also help to keep a spiritual journal which we feed with quotations reflected upon and assimilated, from the text. Such a reflective notebook may record the immediate reactions to the text, the state of mind we were in when we read a passage, as well as to duties faithfully performed as a response to what we read. Recordings of ordinary feelings and happenings set within the framework of the devotional readings keep the realities of ordinary life before us. Writing down our thoughts on the text are more permanently retained and remembered, as well as making the meaning of the message clearer and available to us. This written reflection becomes a further means of nurturing our spiritual life. On re-reading our notes later, we may see an over-confidence, or self-centeredness, or dogmatism, or judgmental attitude on our part, of which we were previously unconscious, but have now recognized to be in need of correction.

Sixth Guideline

Use your choice of the spiritual classics for the exercise of true ecumenicity. Range widely and without prejudice over the classics of devotion, Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant. From our perspective of history and cultural change, we can read more appreciatively of other traditions. Their encapsulation within their own culture helps us also see how likely we are entrapped by our culture too.

Do not let the great merits of the Reformation block your view of the past, so that you think there is nothing between the New Testament and 1520 worth reading! Enjoy richly the devotions of the patristic, medieval, modern and contemporary periods alike. discover the communion of saints, as a living reality in all periods of history. Do not let modernity make you temporarily parochial.

Discern the spirits wisely, by penetrating to the presuppositions and assumptions of theological stance, of your writers. Learn to distinguish false from valid mysticism.

Seventh Guideline

Enjoy fellowship with soul-friends, so that you mutually benefit in a group, a shared reading program. Such a group may meet every three or four weeks to hear and discuss books reviewed in turn, by members of the group. Discernment and shared enrichment are thereby

exercised together. Insights may be shared of a more personal nature as confidentiality is developed. Differing perspectives may correct or add to individual impressions. The common goal of growing in Christ is emphasized as a corporate maturity that excludes no one in the group.

Eighth Guideline

Recognize that spiritual reading meets with obstacles to distract, discourage, or dissuade us from persistence in our reading. Often we do not see clearly enough what are the obstacles, other than that we seem to lose interest or get distracted easily by other things.

A first obstacle to remove is the time-bound and cultural or theological perspective of what we are reading. The imagery of a book, like Teresa's *Interior Castle* or Bunyan's *Holy War*, is bound to a particular time and culture. Nevertheless, the truths and insights contained in such works are timeless. The message of surrender and desire in the one book, or of watchfulness in temptation in the other are timeless. Try not to be prejudiced with such labels as "old fashioned," "relevant for today," "traditional" or even "classic."

We may dislike allegory, or be impatient with the turgid, heavy style of a sermon. Or we may be entranced so much by the romantic imager that we lose sight of the truth being conveyed. For being enraptured, just as much as being turned off, we may remain spectators, not really involved spiritually and personally in the text, and its meaning to us. We remain connoisseurs with no real personal involvement. Many works of scholars are just doing literary criticism with no spiritual food for the soul.

A third obstacle is taking this further into the scholastic games played with the text: such as one-up-manship, where we create novelty of interpretation; or name-dropping, when we review all that everyone else has said about the text; or negative listening, where we ignore all that is said positively and only draw attention to what is not said, and what we think should be said. Such reading is shallow, in spite or apparent erudition, and rejects the docility and abiding in the text which we have already described as necessary for devotional reading.

A fourth obstacle is the ensuing despondency when we compare our state negatively and unfavourably with the spiritual condition of the writer. We can feel so miserable about our sinful, inconsistent weak condition spiritually that we are tempted to feel we should ignore such spiritual books that show us up so badly. Yet we learn precisely in this way that God can do nothing with our self-sufficiency, self-reliance, and self-respect. Acceptance of our limitations, repentance, and pleas for redemption from God, these are the basis for spiritual growth.

Finally, discouragement will rear its ugly head, even when there are signs all around us of encouragement and blessing. Patience with God's ways, trust in God's control of our circumstances, persistence when spiritual exercises seem fruitless, are all needed. The seed has to die, to bear much fruit. Whether then, God leads us into the desert or into the garden in our devotional reading, let us follow Him. Accept mortification, as much as blessing, in your spiritual reading.

Ninth Guideline

Seek a balance in your reading, both between modern and ancient, as well as in the range of your affections being nourished and strengthened by good reading. Remember contemporary literature is untried, lacks vintage, and often reflects the fads of the market place. As C.S. Lewis has said:

A new book is still on trial, and the amateur is not in a position to judge it... The only safety is to have a standard of plain, central Christianity ("mere Christianity" as Baxter called it), which puts the controversies of the moment in their proper perspective. Such a standard can only be acquired from old books. It is a good rule, after reading a new book, never to allow yourself another new one till you have read an old one in between. If that is too much for you, you should read an old one to every three new ones." ("On the Reading of Old Books," *God in the Dock*, edit. by Walter Hooper, Eerdmans, 1970).

Examine also the need of balanced reading. In this same essay, Lewis gives us his preferences. Match, he argues, the somewhat "astringent" *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis, with the "joyous" *Centuries of Meditations* by Thomas Traherne. Perhaps sandwich in between them the anonymously written *Theologia Germanica* which Luther loved. For Lewis, frequent companions were Richard Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, George Herbert's poems, *The Temple*, William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, and Francis de Sales' *Introduction to the Devout Life*. Some books, once read may build important foundations, such as Boethius' *On the Consolations of Philosophy*, which gave Lewis a firm awareness of the solidity of eternity that was more than measureless time. For every young enquirer or convert, Augustine's *Confessions* were Lewis' choice in inspiring the reality of the soul's relationship before God. However, Lewis' boon companions were G.K. Chesterton as his intellectual mentor on the sanity of the Christian faith, and George MacDonald who fed his imagination with true devotion.

Lewis, however, would have us not slavishly imitate his fancies, but encourage us to find devotion in heavy theological stuff as well as theology in the lived experiences of simple things. He

made friends with books in the whole range of affections we need to develop and exercise before God. Today, we tend to suffer from illiteracy of too much rapid, superficial reading - or rather mere glancing at books. Digestion, assimilation and then a life's time companionship with a book is a good test to see whether it is really a classic of faith and devotion, or not.