

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
PTH/MHT 544 The Spiritual Formation of the Minister

Jay P. Taylor, D. Min.
jtaylor@agts.edu
Monday's 1:30am -4:15pm

Fall 2007

3 Hours

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to equip ministers to facilitate the process of lifelong spiritual transformation. While spiritual growth is personal in nature, it is enhanced in a context of authentic community. Toward this end, this course will include opportunities for students to explore a variety of avenues capable of leading to holistic, intentional, and ongoing spiritual growth. In addition to classic spiritual disciplines and virtues, students will consider an array of contributions from various streams of the Christian tradition. The model used in this course serves as a starting point from which leaders can tangibly assist others in experiencing authentic transformation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through the academic, relational and personal requirements of this course each student should gain the following:

Knowledge

1. A biblical understanding of authentic spiritual transformation.
2. A general awareness of the historic and interdenominational body of spiritual literature.
3. A sound grasp of the classic Christian disciplines and the virtues of the spiritual life.
4. An awareness of the unique Pentecostal-charismatic dimensions of Christian spirituality.

Attitudes

1. A healthy self-critical perspective toward one's personal life and ministry.
2. Openness to the edifying work of the Holy Spirit and constructive criticism from fellow members of the body of Christ.
3. A sense of responsibility for, as well as dependence upon, the larger body of Christ, as it relates to spiritual development (accountability).
4. An appreciation for the rich contribution of various Christian traditions to personal spirituality.

Skills

1. Utilization of empirical inventories & resources as tools of personal growth.
2. Development of ability to effectively engage in a broad range of spiritual disciplines, and meaningfully reflect upon the experience.
3. Participation in small group and spiritual exercises in a timely and professional manner.
4. Application of personal spiritual growth exercises to varied ministry settings and responsibilities with a view to future ministry.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Ortberg, John. *The Life You've Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.

Creps, Earl. *Off-Road Disciplines: Spiritual Adventures of the Missional Leader*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, September 2006.

Boa, Kenneth. *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS

Foster, Richard J. and J.B. Smith (eds.). *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993.

Tan, Siang-Yang and Douglas Gregg. *Disciplines of the Holy Spirit: How to Connect to the Spirit's Power and Presence*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.

METHODOLOGY

This course will utilize a wide variety of learning methods and approaches including lecture, class discussion, small groups, readings, and practice of many of the Christian disciplines both in and out of the classroom. While the course will have a strong cognitive component, it is intended to be a personal and community experience in the spiritual growth process.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Class Attendance:** Students are expected to attend class regularly, and be active participants in discussions, activities, etc. Points will be deducted for missed class sessions. In accordance with school policy, a student cannot pass the course if they miss more than two classes.
2. **Reading Requirement:** Read the required texts in their entirety and prepare a two page typewritten "Reading Reflection" on each of the textbooks (not to exceed two pages). In this report you are to state whether or not you have completed the reading in its entirety, and identify the author's thesis or purpose for writing in one succinct statement. Then, discuss 3- 4 concepts from the book that were meaningful to you, and why. (This is not a review or summary outline of the book's main points, but a personal reflection on specific insights that were significant/helpful for you personally, and why.)

Ortberg. *The Life You've Always Wanted*.

Due: September 17

Creps. *Offroad Disciplines*.

Due: October 15

Boa. *Conformed to His Image*.

Due: November 26

3. **Small Group Participation.** Each student will be assigned to a small group. These groups will meet weekly during a portion of the class time. The groups will serve as peer accountability groups to encourage each other in their spiritual development (a crucial function of the body of Christ and this course). Small group grading assessment will be made by group members based on a combination of attendance and involvement.

4. **Development of a Personal Spiritual Growth Plan:** Each student will develop a personal spiritual growth strategy (approximately 5-7 pages). Specific details for developing this plan are contained on the attached sheet. Development plan due: **October 1.**

5. **Implementation of Personal Spiritual Growth Plan:** Each student will carry out his or her personal spiritual growth plan for the duration of the semester. Students will keep a personal log/journal of their spiritual journeys throughout the entire semester. Students may record insights from their readings of Scripture, textbooks and assignments, encounters with people, prayer needs, answers to prayer, insight & support gained from small group, etc. **Your primary journaling focus should be on your progress in carrying out your growth plan (record of activity, reflection on insights gained, successes, failures, adjustments to plan, etc.).** The expectation for an average grade (“C”) is an average of 3 journal entries per week. Your small group should be a great place to encourage and support each other in your progress on your spiritual development plans. Journal due: **December 3.**

6. **Spiritual Transformation Reflection Paper:** Each student will complete a 5-7 page reflection paper discussing their spiritual journey over the course of the semester. This paper should primarily assess the student’s effectiveness in carrying out the spiritual growth plan, but should also make projections for an ongoing personal spiritual growth plan. Specific details for developing this plan are contained on the attached sheet. Paper due: **December 3.**

7. **Final examination:** Each student will complete a final exam. The nature of the exam will be discussed in class. The final will be given **December 10.**

GRADING PROCEDURE

	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Reading and Reading Reports (50 points each)	150	15%
Development of Spiritual Growth Plan	200	20%
Small Group Participation/attendance	100	10%
Implementation of Growth Plan (Journal/Log)	200	20%
Spiritual Transformation Reflection Paper	200	20%
Final Exam	<u>150</u>	<u>15%</u>
	1000	100%

Note: Late work will be penalized.

COURSE OUTLINE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Class Session Topic</u>	<u>Work Due</u>
8/27	Introduction to the Course	-----
9/3	Labor Day--No Class	-----
9/10	Assessing Your Present Spiritual Formation	Completed <i>CLP/TJTA</i> tests
9/17	Facilitating Your Ongoing Spiritual Transformation	Ortberg Reading Report
9/24	Understanding Authentic Spiritual Transformation	-----
10/1	Understanding Authentic Spiritual Transformation	Spiritual Growth Plan
10/8	Understanding Authentic Spiritual Transformation	-----
10/15	Understanding Authentic Spiritual Transformation	Creps Reading Report
10/22	Fall Break--No Class	-----
10/29	Understanding Authentic Spiritual Transformation	-----
11/5	How Christian Traditions Shape Sp. Transformation	-----
11/12	How Christian Traditions Shape Sp. Transformation	-----
11/19	Class Chapel /How Christian Traditions Shape...	-----
11/26	How Christian Traditions Shape Sp. Transformation	Boa Reading Report
12/3	How Christian Traditions Shape Sp. Transformation	Reflection Paper & Journal
12/10	Final Exam	-----

Personal Spiritual Development Plan

Purpose: *The purpose of this assignment is to be intentional and proactive in creating a practical strategy to assist you in your spiritual transformation process. The exact nature of this plan will vary from person to person, for we are all at individual stages in our spiritual journeys. The following seven elements should be included in your growth plan.*

Part 1: Assessment of Your Current Spiritual Formation

Discuss your present spiritual formation (where are you personally in your journey of growing in the image of Christ?). Discuss any activities you practice/routines you follow for the purpose of contributing to your spiritual formation. Some questions to get you thinking:

- How are you doing in cultivating God's friendship on a daily basis?
- Does your life have regular elements/time devoted to spiritual growth?
- What does your current devotional life look like? (What elements comprise it? Areas of strength? Weakness? Are adjustments needed in your current patterns?)

Part 2: Reflection on Factors Influencing Your Growth Plan

Your spiritual growth plan should be influenced by intentional reflection on various resources that are designed to assist you in honest evaluation for the purpose of identifying specific areas needing development. Your personal plan should flow out of thoughtful reflection on each of the following:

- The *Christian Life Profile* test (How do the results of your self-assessment and the three "one-another" assessments contribute to your growth plan?)
- *Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis* results (How does your personal temperament affect your spiritual formation? How do your test results contribute to your growth plan?)
- Input from class small accountability group on the development of your growth plan, and/or input from significant others. (Seek outside input to catch any blind spots and obtain helpful ideas/suggestions for growth goals and steps.)
- Insights/challenges gleaned from course textbooks read to this point
- Reflection on the appreciative inquiry focus questions given in class
- Reflection on personal spiritual time line exercise
- Prayer/guidance of the Spirit (Do you sense God's prompting in certain areas?)
- Optional: Other specific resources that helped you personally identify areas for growth

Briefly summarize/comment how each of these elements has contributed to your present growth plan, or how they may be able to contribute to future growth plans (if there is simply too much to focus on at the present time).

Part 3: Identification of Specific Target Areas for Growth (Growth Goals)

In light of parts 1 and 2, identify 3-5 specific areas in your spiritual life which need development. (The number of growth goals could occasionally be more or less, depending on the nature and extent of the goals.) (*See samples below.*) Some questions to get you thinking:

- Are there problems/neglects that need to be addressed?
- Are there new disciplines or virtues that need to be developed?

- What can you do to improve your relationship with God and increase your spiritual transformation?

Part 4: Identification of Specific Steps for Growth

For each of the 3-5 growth areas listed above, identify specific steps (action plan) you will take to help you experience growth in that area. (*See samples below.*) Things to keep in mind:

- These steps should be tangible and practical. The more specific you can be, the greater the chance of experiencing growth.
- These steps should be realistic. Your plan must fit your current life context.
- In order to carry out your steps, will you have to make changes in your life/behavior?
- As you carry out these steps, are there potential pitfalls or challenges you may face?

Part 5: Identification of Accountability Plan

Identify specific accountability measures you will have to assist you in following your plan. Who or what will help hold you accountable in carrying out your plan? [This can include people (accountability partner, small group, spouse, friend, etc.) as well as other non-human systems/resources (i.e. journals, charts, contracts, etc.).] Things to keep in mind:

- Are the means of accountability specific? (Do you have tangible means of accountability for each growth goal?)
- Are the accountability means consistent? (Can it regularly keep you on the right track?)
- Are the accountability means personal? (Will it effectively motivate you to keep up with your growth plan?)
- Are the accountability means realistic? (You don't want to expect more from someone than is reasonable.)

Part 6: Identification of Growth Evaluation Plan

Identify specific evaluation measures you will have to assist you in assessing if the desired growth has occurred. This can include people or other systems/resources that can help you evaluate growth (i.e. journals, charts, assessment tests, reward system, etc.).

- Are the means of evaluation specific? (Do I have tangible means of evaluation for each growth goal?)
- Are the evaluation means measurable? (This is the ideal. The more tangible you can be for each growth goal, the better.)

Part 7: Identification of Anticipated Ramifications of Growth

As you carry out this plan, what do you envision as a result of the anticipated growth? What changes could result in your life? In addition to welcome changes, could there be any difficult changes as well?

Facilitating Intentional Spiritual Growth

Example 1- Area of Desired Growth: Compassion

Part 1: Assessment of Your Current Spiritual Formation

Part 2: Reflection on Factors Influencing Your Growth Plan

Part 3: Growth Goal (*My specific target area for growth*)

- Compassion: I want to have more compassion for people in need around me.

Part 4: Action Steps (*Practical and realistic steps to accomplish this goal*)

- I will volunteer one afternoon a month to the Big Brothers program (soup kitchen, meals on wheels, nursing home)
- I will look each week for one person in need whom I can bless (i.e. give groceries, fix car, provide rides, etc.)
- I will contribute \$20 dollars per month to the Victory Mission (or Salvation Army, etc.)

Part 5: Accountability (*Who or what will hold me accountable?*)

- I will commit to the Big Brother program a six-month minimum commitment.
- I will log in my journal my weekly act of compassion for someone in need
- I will share with my small group at least once of month on my progress in this area.

Part 6: Evaluation (*Tangible means of evaluating if I am growing in this area*)

- In 3 months I'll retake the *Christian Life Profile*. I would like to see an increase in my "compassion" score.
- I would like to hear my spouse/pastor/other give an unsolicited comment on my increased compassion/concern.
- I will log my experiences in my journal. I can look back to see how consistent I have been, how my attitude is, etc.
- I should see an increase in my desire to be involved in activities that show compassion to others. (i.e. more prayer for others, volunteer 2 afternoons a month instead of 1; Give \$30 dollars a month instead of \$20, etc.)

Part 7: Anticipated Ramifications (*What changes could happen in your life as a result of this growth?*)

- As I volunteer my time and money to assist others, God will begin to deal with roots of selfishness and hurry sickness. The end result should be an increase my compassion and sensitivity to the needs of others.
- As my heart becomes more sensitive, it will probably impact my time and pocketbook to an even greater degree. For example, God may prompt me to continue my volunteer work past the commitment for this semester, or to even increase it. Or, I may feel led to increase my charitable giving from \$20 per month to \$30. I will need to discuss these kinds of issues with my wife, as they will affect her as well.

- As I begin to truly love and understand the people I am working with, God could possibly call me into that kind of ministry. Am I willing to obey, however God leads, even if it doesn't have the pay & prestige of other ministries?

Example 2 - Area of Desired Growth: Giving Away My Faith (Evangelism)

Part 3: Growth Goal (*My specific target area for growth*)

- Evangelism: I want to do a better job at sharing the love of Christ with people who do not yet know Him.

Part 4: Action Steps (*Practical and realistic steps to accomplish this goal*)

- I will commit to pray every morning that God will give me a divine appointment with someone that day.
- I will carry a small New Testament with me at all times in order to be ready to share/give it to someone.
- I will invite at least one neighbor (co-worker, etc.) to dinner in my home each month.
- I will go to one "secular" event each month, such as a coffeehouse, concert, art fair, play, etc.
- I will read at least one book on friendship evangelism during the semester. I will begin with *Gentle Persuasion*.

Part 5: Accountability (*Who or what will hold me accountable?*)

- I will invite neighbors/co-workers to dinner in advance so that I'm committed and can't back out at the last minute.
- I will ask my spouse/pastor to periodically ask me about the last time I shared Christ with someone.
- I will log in my journal weekly my evangelism efforts, prayer requests, etc.
- I will share with my small group at least once of month on my progress in this area.

Part 6: Evaluation (*Tangible means of evaluating if I am growing in this area*)

- In 3 months I will retake the *Christian Life Profile* test. I would like to see an increase in my "sharing Christ" score.
- I will be able to list what neighbors/co-workers have been to my home each month.
- I will log my experiences in my journal. I can look back to see how consistent I have been, how my attitude is, etc.

Part 7: Anticipated Ramifications (*What changes could happen in your life as a result of this growth?*)

- As I grow in giving away my faith, more people will have been exposed to, and come to know, the love of
- Christ!
- As I spend increased time sharing my faith, my confidence level should increase in this area.

- As I develop new relationships with people who do not yet know Christ, it will take ongoing time and commitment to nurture these relationships. (I can't just talk to my neighbors this semester only, for the purpose of this assignment, and then drop them like the plague.)
 - If I truly say that this is a priority, then I must be willing to make this priority fit my life actions. For example, am I willing to give up time from studying to nurture relationships with non-believers? (i.e. Am I willing to settle for a "B" on a paper instead of an "A", because my neighbor came to me seeking help at the same time I was trying to get the paper done?)
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Spiritual Transformation Reflection Paper

Purpose

Each student will complete a 5-7 page reflection paper discussing their spiritual journey over the course of this semester. This paper should primarily assess your effectiveness in developing and carrying out your spiritual growth plan, but should also make projections for an ongoing personal spiritual growth plan.

Reflection Papers should cover the following three elements. Foundational questions to get you thinking have been provided, but you are not limited to these.

Part 1: Development of Your Spiritual Growth Strategy

Reflect on the process by which you developed your personal spiritual growth strategy at the start of the semester. In hindsight, what can you learn from this process? How helpful were the following elements to the development of your plan:

- Results from *Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis*
- Results from the *Christian Life Profile* test (self and others)
- Reflection on Appreciative inquiry focus questions
- Reflection on spiritual time line exercise
- Input from peer accountability group and significant others

Did you invest the necessary time and effort to get an honest assessment of your initial situation, and develop a truly beneficial growth plan? Were you successful in developing a realistic plan that fit your context and personality? What principles can you apply for future growth plans?

Part 2: Carrying Out and Logging Your Spiritual Growth Strategy

Reflect personally on your experience.

How well did you carry out your personal spiritual growth plan over the semester?

How well did you do in keeping a personal log/journal of this growth over these weeks?

Were you realistic in your plan? Were adjustments necessary? Did you make them?

What kind of growth did you experience as a result of your plan?

Part 3: Projections for an ongoing personal spiritual growth plan.

In light of this semester's experience, where will you go from here?

What does your immediate plan for ongoing spiritual growth look like? (be sure to include growth goals, practical action steps, means for accountability, and means of evaluation)

Long term, what elements of this whole intentional process will you utilize in an ongoing way in order to assess future growth goals, facilitate future growth, and evaluating your future spiritual transformation?

Note: All supporting documentation should be submitted with the reflection paper (i.e. copy of *T-JTA* score sheet, copy of *Christian Life Profile* score sheet; personal responses to appreciative inquiry reflection questions, spiritual time line, personal growth strategy/plan; journal/log).

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SPECIFIC DATA

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