



Spiritual Formation of the Minister

Professional Doctoral Seminar – THCH8301/CEDI8301

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Fall Semester

September 11-13, 2023.

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Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

The seminar delineates the sources, character, and dynamics of the spiritual formation of the Christian minister. Formation is viewed as a foundational ministry and as a reciprocal responsibility of pastor and congregation. It is vitally related to the quality of the congregation's worship and service, and the integrity of the pastor's prophetic awareness. Combining trenchant analyses of contemporary religion and culture with insights and analyses from Scripture and the classics of Christian devotion, the study sets forth the classical spiritual disciplines as essential ingredients of authentic formation. The seminar constitutes an urgent call for spiritual maturity in Christian ministry and provides clear directives for achieving it.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students successfully completing the seminar will demonstrate:

- foundational understanding of Christian spirituality and its major paradigms;
- application of personal spiritual formation principles and practices by:
 - Journaling while practicing selected spiritual disciplines
 - Responding to reflection and application questions presented in the textbooks
 - Writing a personal spiritual growth plan
 - Identifying and presenting concepts and practices discerned from the assigned textbooks.
- ability to communicate the value and principles of spiritual formation in the local ministry context through writing an interview report, reflection paper and personal growth plan.

Textbooks

NOTE: Not all textbooks will be required by each participant in the class. Some books are assigned to specific individuals or groups. Review the list of assignments before purchasing textbooks.

Each student is to read the following textbooks and to be prepared to integrate their content into seminar discussions and presentations:

Required Texts:

Foster, Richard J. and James Bryan Smith, eds. *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*. Rev. edition. San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2005.
ISBN: 978-0060777500

Issler, Klaus. *Living into the Life of Jesus: The Formation of Christian Character*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. 2012. ISBN: 978-0830838110

You will be assigned one of the following classical texts. (read and report)

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. Translated by R. H. Fuller. New York: Macmillan, 1963.

Foster, Richard J. *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*. San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 1992.

Liddell, Eric. *The Disciplines of the Christian Life*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985.

Muller, George. *The Autobiography of George Muller*. New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1984.

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

Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

You will be assigned one of the following contemporary or practical texts. (read and report)

Barton, R. Ruth. *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*. Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2006.

Bridges, Jerry. *The Practice of Godliness*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1983.

Chandler, Diane J. *Christian Spiritual Formation: An Integrated Approach for Personal and Relational Wholeness*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014.

Miller, Paul E. *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World*. [New Edition]. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2017.

Scazzaro, Peter. *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017.

Shiflett, Diana. *Spiritual Practices in Community: Drawing Groups into the Heart of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018.

Before the Seminar:

- 1. Primary Textbook Reading and Reflective Summary:** You will read the primary textbooks in their entirety. Be prepared to participate in a dialog/conversation concerning the Foster and Issler texts.
 - a. As you read *Living into the Life of Jesus* answer the questions at the end of most chapters. Submit a paper detailing a thoughtful but laconic Reflective Summary of your responses to the questions. The assignment will be confidential and seen only by the seminar faculty. Be prepared to participate in a class discussion about the content and personal reaction to the text. (5-6 pages) Parenthetical citations are acceptable. A header with Name, Assignment, Seminar, and Date may be substituted for the title page. **Due September 10, 2023**
 - b. Presentations: Each student will present the content and implications of a segment from *Devotional Classics* (Foster and Smith). Students will present the main ideas, ask relevant questions, and generate group dialogue. Use the time primarily for discussion not content. Assume that all students have read your book summary and expect responses. Assignments will be made by **August 1, 2023**.
- 2. Secondary Book Summaries:** **Due September 10, 2023**

Each student will complete a 2 page summary on each of the assigned secondary texts (a template will be supplied by the professor). Each summary should include suggestions for personal or corporate application in a local ministry context. Summaries will be submitted in pdf format on Discussion Board in Blackboard by **Sept 11, 2023**. Be prepared to present/share your summaries with the class. Be prepared for 10 minutes of presentation and discussion (as time allows.) A survey asking for your preference will be sent to you after registration. Respond to the survey ASAP. **Reading assignments will be made on or before August 1, 2023.** Students are expected to read the summaries posted by other students prior to the seminar.
- 3. Spiritual Formation Journal:** **Due: November 26, 2023**

Each student is to keep a spiritual formation journal. A minimum of 5 entries per week is expected for at least 3 consecutive weeks between **August 1 and November 19**. Entries should include spiritual insights based upon the selected reading assignments, personal

devotional materials and the practice of spiritual disciplines. Entries will not be reviewed by the faculty instructors but should be referenced in the assigned reflection paper (Assignment #10). You will self-report completion of this assignment in Blackboard.

4. Interview:

Due: September 11, 2023

Interview an experienced and respected minister (pastor, staff, chaplain, etc) on the theme of spiritual formation. Prepare a written summary (3 pages) of the interview highlighting the most salient responses. Be prepared to discuss your conclusions during the seminar.

Ask the minister to:

- Define spirituality and state the value of spiritual formation for the minister
- Identify marks of spiritual maturity
- Describe the stage or season of life most impactful in spiritual growth
- Indicate how spiritual maturity can be achieved
- Ask about maintaining spiritual vitality in ministry (and failure to do so.)
- Note particular challenges or problems related to personal spiritual formation

During the Seminar:

5. Seminar Participation: Students are expected to be active participants in all sessions of the seminar. Note: The seminar actually begins with the receipt of the syllabus and continues through the material completed after the three-day session.

6. Discussion of the Primary Textbooks: Students are expected to demonstrate critical thinking and reflection through discussion of insights, questions, disagreements, comprehensions and criticisms of the primary textbooks.

7. Reports on Interviews: Students will report briefly on their interviews.

8. Group Presentations: Students will be placed into groups and assigned topics from the *Devotional Classics* textbook to read and to present during class time. Assignments will be made by **August 1, 2023**. Students will be expected to succinctly present the main ideas, ask relevant questions, and generate group dialogue. Allow approximately 12-15 minutes for your group's presentation. (see assignment #1)

9. Presentations of the Secondary Textbooks: Each student will present the summary of assigned secondary textbooks (either in pairs or small groups.). The template for the summary is available on Blackboard. Allow approximately 10 minutes for your presentation and class discussion. Use the time for both content and concept dialogue. Assume that students have read your book summary and expect responses. (see assignment #2)

Following the seminar:

10. Reflection Paper -

Due: December 3, 2023

Submit a paper synthesizing the content and experience of this seminar. The paper, 6-7 pages in length, should utilize the data gathered from the interview (Assignment #4), personal practices and theological/theoretical concepts. The paper will have two sections, personal and corporate. (You are urged to formulate your content as you complete your course assignments.) *Address the following topics and questions in your paper.*

Personal:

- Compare the interview responses to the principles learned during this seminar.
- Which 3 disciplines are most impactful to **your** spiritual formation?
- Which spiritual discipline(s) do you most need to add to your lifestyle? Why?
- Which spiritual discipline seems the most difficult to continue in your life? Why?
- What insights about your spiritual walk or personal life did you discover?
- How does your own spiritual life influence the spiritual health of the congregation or leadership team?
- What disciplines should be emphasized more strongly in your congregation?

Corporate/Congregational:

- Suggest ways a minister may facilitate spiritual formation of the congregation.
- Discuss how spiritual health shapes a minister's priorities, perception of authority and power, leadership style, and the content and spirit of preaching/teaching and congregational worship.
- Offer suggestions how a minister can make spiritual formation a more integral part of local Christian ministry.

11. Final Project - Personal Growth Plan**Due: December 10, 2023**

Design a one-year personal spiritual growth plan. Determine your spiritual formation weakness/needs and articulate specific goals to address them. (base on assignment #10) Include spiritual practices presented in class such as Bible reading, meditation, prayer, readings, group life, etc. Growth Plan will be individual so creativity is encouraged. Include a bibliography of texts to be read or used, cite websites, resources, etc.

Evaluation

Book Reading and Response	15%
Book Summaries 2@10	20%
Interview	15%
Journal (self-report)	10%
Reflection Paper	15%
Final Project (PGP)	25%

Class Schedule: (Subject to Change)

The seminar is scheduled to meet from 1:00 to 9:00 p.m. (Central Daylight Saving Times) Monday September 11; 8:00am to 4:00pm on Tuesday, September 12, and 8:00 to 4:00pm on Wednesday, September 13.

Monday

1:00 - 1:45pm	Introductions and Seminar Overview
1:45 - 2:45pm	Issler Text - Discussion
2:45 - 3:15pm	Break
3:15 - 4:45pm	Biblical/Theological Backgrounds
4:45 - 5:15pm	Break
5:15 - 6:15pm	Interview Report Discussion
6:15 - 7:00pm	Conclusion, Presentation Preparation (dismiss)

Tuesday

8:00 - 8:30am	Devotion & Review
8:30 - 9:45am	<i>Devotional Classics</i> – Review and dialogue
9:45- 10:00am	Break
10:00 - 10:45am	<i>Devotional Classics</i> – Review and dialogue continued
10:45 - 11:45am	Chapel (Worship)
11:45 -1:00pm	Lunch
1:00 - 2:30pm	Spiritual Development Theory
2:30 - 2:45pm	Break
2:45 - 4:00pm	Book Reports - Contemporary

Wednesday

8:00 - 8:30 am	Devotion & Review
8:30 - 10:00am	Book Reports - Classic
10:00 -10:15am	Break
10:15 - 11:45am	Debrief, Discuss, and Apply
11:45 - 1:00pm	Lunch
1:00 - 2:30pm	Observations & Discussion
2:30 - 3:30pm	Assessment and Application
3:30 - 4:00pm	Wrap up, unfinished business, follow up assignments.

Selected Bibliography

Barna, George. *Growing True Disciples*. Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2001.

Blackaby, Henry T. and Claude V. King. *Experiencing God: How to Live the Full Adventure of Knowing and Doing the Will of God*. Nashville: B & H, 1994.

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- Coleman, Robert E. *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 1993.
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- Cymbala, Jim. *Break Through Prayer*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003.
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- MacArthur, John. *The Keys to Spiritual Growth: Unlocking the Riches of God*. Wheaton: Crossway, 1991.
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- Murray, Andrew. *Absolute Surrender*. Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1982.
- _____. *With Christ in the School of Prayer*.
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- Packer, James I. *Knowing God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973.
- Peterson, Eugene H. *Subversive Spirituality*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997.
- Plantinga, Cornelius, Jr. *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Platt, David. *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream*. Colorado Spring: Multnomah, 2010.
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