

BUGEMA



UNIVERSITY

**SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

COURSE MODULE

RELB 2104: Spiritual Formation

A self-instructional undergraduate course module

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COURSE INFORMATION

Course Code:	RELB 2104:
Course Title:	Spiritual Formation
Credit Unit:	3 (45 Hrs)
Semester:	One
Course Duration:	8 weeks (One hour each day for five days, 2 hours for presentation of portfolio, and 3 hours for final examination= 45 Hrs)
Start:	September 1

PREFACE

Welcome to **Spiritual Formation**. This course, offers a theological practical understanding of spiritual growth of an individual and the development of personal character shaped by the values and virtues of Christian living and service. It is a foundational study of the process of allowing the Holy Spirit to transform one into the likeness of Christ. While it is grounded in the Scripture and theology, this spiritual formation course, also includes practical elements in the process of spiritual formation that find expression in practical Christian living and service. However, this course is also an eye opener to unbiblical methods of Spiritual Formation and their dangers.

This course consists of thirteen units spread across four lecture weeks. Some general guidelines are suggested for the amount of time you should devote to each unit to successfully achieve the goals and objectives of the course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This program aims to provide students with;

1. Skills to perform gospel ministry within the context of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
2. Interpret Scripture using the historical-grammatical method.
3. Teach, Preach, and lead the Church to proclaim the everlasting gospels in the context of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
4. Ability to proceed with further theological studies

LEARNING OUTCOME

Upon the successful completion of this course the students should be able to:

1. Comprehend biblical, theological, and practical foundations for spiritual formation.
2. Appreciate that “divine grace” is the mean by which Bible students place themselves before God so that He can transform them
3. Appreciate personal devotion, Family worship, and the church as key factor in fostering spiritual formation.
4. Understand the importance of Personality, Character, and Professional development in the process of continuous growth.
5. Understand the importance of developing a healthy devotional life as the base for ministry, personal growth and development.
6. Understand that the goal of spiritual growth is to become like Jesus.

Learning Process

To complete this course, engage diligently with the study units, reference materials, and community engagement practicum. Each unit contains deliverables designed to test your understanding. Each deliverable assignment from each unit and the community engagement practicum must be compiled into a portfolio file for formative assessment. The final examination will be done face-to-face on the main Campus. This 8-week course demands dedication and active involvement to fully harness the knowledge and skills presented.

Learning Schedule

The Learning schedule provides outlines for the completion of assignments and the practical project. Adhering to this schedule is crucial to ensure that you participate in the learning, do the assignments, and attend to the practicum. Proactive planning and consistent effort will prevent any lag in your progress.

Assessment

The assessment comprises assignments, practical evaluation, and final examination. The assessments require a student to apply the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course. Your engagement and submissions must align with deadlines stated in the Presentation

Schedule. The practical assignment plays a pivotal role in your final assessment, emphasizing the importance of your contribution to community development.

Deliverables Assignments and Final Examination

There are 13 Deliverables Assignments (DA) and one practicum report in this course. You will submit all the assignments. You are encouraged to work on all the questions thoroughly. The DA constitute 30% of the final score and one practicum report constitutes 20% of the final score of the course. You will be able to complete your assignments from the information and materials contained in your set books, reading and study units. However, you should demonstrate that you have read and researched more widely than the required minimum.

You should use other references to have a broad viewpoint of the subject and also to give you a deeper understanding of the subject. When you have completed each assignment, write a cover page showing the unit addressed and the date completed, then file it in the portfolio. If for any reason, you cannot complete your work on time, write a note explaining why it was not done on time and how you did compensate the time. The portfolio will be presented face to face at the main Campus (Bugema University) one week before the final examination. Examination will be granted only after presentation of the portfolio is successfully presented.

Assessment Plan

Formative Assessment	Summative Assessment
Deliverables Assignments 39%	Portfolio (formative 50%)
Community Engagement Practicum 11%	Final assignment (50%)

University Grading System

Score Range	Letter Grade	Performance Description	Quality Points
80-100%	A	Excellent	5.00
75% – 79.99%	B+	Very Good	4.50
70% – 74.99%	B	Good	4.00
65% – 69.99%	C+	Above Average	3.50
60% - 64.99%	C	Average	3.00
55% – 59.99%	D+	Average	2.50
50% - 54.99%	D	Below Average	2.00
0% - 49.99%	F	Failure	1.00

How to Get the Most from the Course

In self-distance learning the study units replace the university lecturer. This is one of the great advantages of distance learning; you can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace and at a time and place that suit you best. Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to a lecturer. In the same way that a lecturer might set you some reading to do, the study units tell you when to read your books or other material, and when to embark on assignments. Just as a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise, your study units provide exercises for you to do at appropriate points. Each of the study units follows a common format.

The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. You should use these objectives to guide your study. When you have finished the unit, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If you make a habit of doing this, you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course and getting the best grade. The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources. This will usually be either from your set books or from a readings section.

The purpose of the practicum is twofold. First, it will enhance your understanding of the key principles of Spiritual Formation; second, it will give you practical experience and skills to address Spiritual growth issues in the church and society. The critical thinking skills you will

develop during your studies are applicable in pastoral ministry, so you must encounter them during your studies.

The following is a practical strategy for working through the course. If you get any problem consult your lecturer. Remember that your lecturer's job is to help you understand the procedures and content. If you need help, don't hesitate to call and ask your lecturer.

Read this Course Guide Thoroughly

1. Organize a study schedule. Refer to the 'Course overview' for more details. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Important information, e.g., details of your lecturer, and the date of the first day of the semester. You need to gather together all this information in one place, such as your diary or a wall calendar. Whatever method you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates for the working breach unit.
2. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. The major reason that students fail is that they get behind with their coursework. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your lecturer know before it is too late for help.
3. Turn to Unit 1 and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.
4. Assemble the study materials. Information about what you need for a unit is given in the 'Overview' at the beginning of each unit. You will also need both the study unit you are working on and one of your set books on your desk at the same time.
5. Work through the unit. The content of the unit itself has been arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow. As you work through the unit, you will be instructed to read sections from your set books or other articles. Use the unit to guide your reading.
6. Work before the relevant due date (about 4 weeks before the due dates), and get the Assignment File for the next required assignment. Keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignments carefully. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the exam. Submit all assignments no later than the due date.

7. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study material or consult your lecturer.
8. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to pace your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.
9. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in this Course Guide), and arrange your portfolio beginning with the DA of the first unit to the last.

Study Units

There are three (4) modules of thirteen (13) units and one (1) Practicum. The modules should be studied carefully and diligently to acquire a complete understanding of the content of the course.

MODULE AND UNIT OUTLINE

MODULE ONE: INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION

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|--------|--|
| UNIT 1 | Definition of Spiritual Formation |
| UNIT 2 | Biblical Foundation of Spiritual Formation |
| UNIT 3 | Journey of Spiritual Formation |

MODULE TWO: SPIRITUAL FORMATION COMMON DISCIPLINES.

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|--------|-------------------------------------|
| UNIT 4 | Spiritual Formation: Word of God |
| UNIT 5 | Spiritual Formation through Prayer |
| UNIT 6 | Spiritual Formation through Service |

UNIT 7 Spiritual Formation through Fellowship

MODULE THREE: SPIRITUAL FORMATION UNCOMMON DISCIPLINES.

UNIT 8 Spiritual Formation through Solitude and Meditation

UNIT 9 Spiritual Formation through Fasting and Simplicity

MODULE FOUR: UNDERSTANDING GOD AND SELF

UNIT 10 Divine Sovereignty and Sinful Humanity

UNIT 11 Spiritual Formation and Leadership

UNIT 12 Spiritual Formation through Temperance

UNIT 13 Spiritual Formation through Suffering

MODULE FIVE: ENGAGEMENT PRACTICUM

UNIT 14 Identification of a Spiritual challenge and Suggested solutions

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Unit 1:Definition of Spiritual Formation

Unit Structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)
- 1.3 Main Content
 - 1.3.1 What is Spiritual Formation?
 - 1.3.2. Spiritual Formation as a work of Grace
 - 1.3.3 Spiritual formation as a Process

1.4 Unit Summary

1.1 Introduction

Welcome to Module One. The first unit in this module is the definition of Spiritual Formation. In this unit, we ponder upon the meaning of Spiritual Formation and some concepts related to it. This unit builds a foundation for other complex units that follow. It intends to provide a relevant definition of Spiritual Formation that resonates with the course, providing a solid foundation to understand Spiritual Formation principles and practices.

1.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Define the general concept of Spiritual Formation.
2. Relate Spiritual Formation and responsibilities of Christian life.
3. Understand the basis of Spiritual Formation and its practical Application
4. Explain the essence of Spiritual Formation.

1.3 Main Content

1.3.1. What is Spiritual Formation?

In most cases Spiritual Formation is defined as the intentional *communal process* of growing in our relationship with God and becoming conformed to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

However it can also be asserted that Spiritual Formation refers to consciously nurturing a living relationship with God in the context of *a religious community*. (See Heb. 10:25).

1.3.2. Spiritual Formation as a work of Grace

In a sense there is nothing we can do to transform ourselves into Jesus' likeness. Yet there is much we must do to make ourselves completely available to God's transforming grace.

Note: Grace is opposite to earning but is not opposite to effort. Though certain churches emphasize grace without human effort, and it is clear that every advance in the Christian life is a miracle of grace, yet grace involves a cooperative effort between the Holy Spirit and the Christian. In the final analysis, there is nothing we can do to transform ourselves into persons who love and serve Jesus. But we can make ourselves available to God to do that work of transforming grace in our lives. Our part is to offer ourselves to God in ways that enables Him to do that transforming work of grace.

As an example of this cooperative effort between grace and effort, consider the way the scriptures were written. We know that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God.” (2Tim 3:16). In other words, all scripture is a miracle of grace. God inspired men to write, he empowered them to write, and he preserved their writing. And yet, our Bible was not a product of effortless grace. Without men putting forth much effort in meditation, gathering information, checking sources, organizing thoughts, perspiration there would be no Scripture! Paul said something similar about his ministry: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” (1Cor. 3:6 NKJV).

Remember, believers are in scripture encouraged to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:12-13). Thus Spiritual Formation is the work of grace in the sense that even the good done by a christian, is accomplished by God doing it through him or her.

1.3.3. Spiritual formation as a Process

Spiritual Formation is a process and ongoing activity. Paul compares it to the process of planting, watering, and growing (1Cor. 3:6). It involves growth in love, in faith, and in knowledge. Conformity to Christ’s image is a wonderful, though sometimes a slow and an

erratic journey punctuated by moments of profound leaps forward. We should not be discouraged when we fail instead we should allow failure to humble us and train us.

Spiritual formation happens at a different pace for every believer. The pace is affected by the intensity of the believer's desire. The scriptures teach, "Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be filled" (Matt. 5:6). Not every believer cultivates the same intensity of hunger and thirst.

God has not created us as robots or machines. We are complex human beings created with the capacity to think, feel, and choose. Spiritual formation begins with the progressive transformation of the mind, leading to the transformation of our affections and natural transformation of our behavior. Spiritual formation which shapes us by life experiences.

Experience doesn't come all at once but a little at a time. Much of this experience is painful.

It has been observed that it is doubtful whether God can use a person greatly before letting one to go through painful experience.

Nevertheless, growth, as the ordinary way things happen in the world, shows the way God has typically chosen to work in the world. If we insist that spiritual development occurs only in crisis events, we limit God and disregard his sovereignty.

As we look unto Jesus, the Holy Spirit transforms us into the image of Jesus with ever increasing glory (2 Cor. 3:18).

If our eyes are fixed on the cross, we cannot be ruled by pride, self-gratification, or worldly pleasure. If our eyes are on Jesus, we cannot hate, cannot harbor bitterness or resentment, cannot forsake sacrifice, cannot murmur or complain, cannot let sin reign in our lives, nor live in spiritual defeat. If our eyes are fixed on Jesus, we cannot turn back, cannot despair,

cannot fall, cannot be defeated, and cannot be separated from the love of God. As we look to the gospel, its power becomes increasingly powerful in us.

Spiritual Formation is a Process of Transformation. It is the process, of “putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not organizing our lives around the satisfaction of our natural desires”

(Rom. 13:14. In that process, you “put off your old self, which belongs to the former manner life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ... to be renewed in the spirit of your minds ... to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:22–24).

1.4 Unit Summary

Spiritual Formation is a divine work of grace which continues in the life of a believer after being justified when one repents one’s sins and accepts Christ as one’s personal savior. It includes not only being assisted by God but mutual ministry whereby one is ministered by fellow believers and one reciprocates by ministering others.

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Unit 2: Biblical Foundation of Spiritual

Unit Structure

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

2.3 Main Content

2.3.1 The biblical foundation of Spiritual Formation.

2.3.2 Total Depravity of Man

2.3.3 The New Call to Holiness

2.3.4 God’s plan of Salvation

2.4 Unit Summary

2.1 Introduction

Welcome to Unit Two. In this unit we explore the fact that every sincere Christian tries his or her best to live a lifestyle that glorifies God. But everyone who has tried it knows that it is not as easy as it sounds. What is the cause of this predicament? Are we the ones who misinterpret scriptures, in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament, by making them set a standard that is too high for us to attain or is the problem in our human nature?

2.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Analyze the biblical concepts on human sinfulness and the call to holiness in connection with Spiritual Formation.
2. Understand the building blocks of salvation assurance and its importance.
3. Demonstrate the ability to articulate the gospel clearly as the foundation of salvation assurance.

2.3 Main Content

2.3.1 The biblical foundation of Spiritual Formation.

When the scriptures are properly scrutinized in both the Old and New Testament, text can be found that command God's people who trust Him to live holy lives. At the same time texts can be found in both testaments which reveal that human beings have sunk too deep in sin that they are in a helpless situation to extricate themselves out of it. Hence, the question is what is the solution to this paradoxical situation that is apparent to every serious critical student of scriptures?

2.3.2 Total Depravity of Man

The following are some of the Old Testament scriptures which reveal man's sinful nature and helplessness to extricate himself out of it: David confessed, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5 NKJ). We can't say that it is only David who was born in sin. King Solomon observed that, "Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who *continually* does good and who never sins" (Eccl. 7:20 NAS). We read in Isaiah: "*But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear*" (59:2 NKJ). It is people's sins that have separated them from God and which disable them from seeing Him. Then we find in Jeremiah: "*The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?*" (17:9). This text implies that there is a possibility of an individual considering one's self to be righteous whereas in the sight of God one may be wicked.

In the New Testament the scriptures which reveal Man's total depravity clearly show that both people who profess to believe in God and those who do not are all under the power of sin. For instance Paul asserts that, "*Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin*" (Rom 3:9 NIV). He goes on to confirm that, "*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Rom 3:23 NIV). It is also showed that, "For the good that I will *to do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that I practice." (Rom 7:19 NKJ), and this is a reality in daily life for all Christians.

2.3.3 The New Call to Holiness

The Scriptures envision a God-exalting spiritual life that sets the bar very high, as high as it could be: "For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44). The very holiness of God is put forth as the standard for believers to meet. And not only were the Israelites called to reflect divine holiness, but the same is true for followers of Christ in the new covenant era. This continuity is expressed in 1 Peter 1:15–16:

“As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written “you shall be holy, for I am holy.”

For the apostle Peter such holiness is not an abstract, theoretical notion but an intensely practical matter. It involves disciplining the mind and placing one’s hope fully in the grace of God, and it’s expressed in obedience to the Lord, that is, by refusing to follow “the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance” (1Pet. 1:14 NIV). This isn’t an otherworldly vision but a true-to-life calling to godly action and moral purity in *all of life*.

Nevertheless, experience shows that nobody’s perfect, and that certainly includes those who aspire to imitate God and follow in Jesus’ steps. But the blunt command is delivered without qualification: *Be holy in all your conduct*.

2.3.4 God’s plan of Salvation

How do we put the fact of depravity and the call to holiness together? God has made provision for this human dilemma through justification and sanctification. While both involve God’s work in people’s lives, in justification God declares a person not guilty before the bar of divine justice, while sanctification encompasses the ongoing process of becoming more and more holy, more like Christ. These two works of God go hand in hand, but they aren’t the same. The former is decisive and complete the moment it’s announced by the Great Judge; He accepts the Son’s life as payment covering the penalty for our sin, and we’re declared “Not Guilty.” But the latter is ongoing. To be sure, it’s decisive; He will bring it to completion (Romans 8:31; Philippians 1:6). But we actually experience, at best, only a progressive realization of holiness, and progress invariably implies that some measure of indwelling sin remains. The New Testament shows that God’s reign is “now but not yet.” We read that “the kingdom of God is in the midst of you” (Luke 17:21) even though Jesus teaches his followers to pray that the kingdom will yet come (Matthew 6:10).

When it comes to being holy in all of our conduct, and doing so consistently over time, however, no one can claim to have measured up. To do so would be like high jumping over the highest storied building in your capital city. An honest careful attention to God's Word—makes this evident. Who can claim to have a flawless record of holiness in thoughts, words, and deeds? So the reader of Scripture is left wondering what to do with 1 Peter 1:15–16. Even a brief glance elsewhere in the Bible reveals a great many texts that set the bar of spiritual practice exceedingly high.

The High Standard of the Texts John's First Epistle. “No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him” (1 John 3:6 RSV). “No one born of God commits sin; for God's nature abides in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God” (3:9 RSV). “We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him” (5:18 NKJ).

What did John mean bywriting such texts? Some have suggested that it seems he was trying to communicate a critical point. He may have believed that sinning is so utterly irrational or stupid that *no one in one's right mind would ever consider sinning a reasonable behavior*. And that at the same time he may have considered the miracle of being born of God so radical that it produced a person who was truly righteous.

Others have found the solution in versions such as the NIV and the ESV which render the Greek present-tense verbs in 3:6; 3:9; and 5:18 in such a way as to encompass continuing action: “No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him” (3:6). “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God” (3:9). “We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning” (5:18). The sense conveyed, then, is that habitually yielding to sin, or a lifestyle characterized by sin, is not possible for a person born of God and indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

The View of Believers towards the High Spiritual Standard. Thus the Christian's attitude should be like that of Jesus Christ, depicted in the second chapter of Philippians, who humbly set aside his own privileges and embraced the way of service, pouring out his life for others. Believers are to follow in the steps of the One who committed no sin (1 Peter 2:21–22).

2.4 Unit Summary

Spiritual Formation is work of God's grace whereby justification is instantaneous the moment one repents and accepts Christ as one's savior, while sanctification is a lifetime process whereby the Holy Spirit works in one's life to enable one to possess a Christlike character.

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Unit 3: The Journey of Spiritual Formation

Unit Structure

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)
- 3.3 Main Content
 - 3.3.1 Mind Renewal
 - 3.3.2 Spiritual Training
 - 3.3.3 Involvement in a Christian community
- 3.4 Unit Summary

3.1 Introduction

How does the passing of time influence our lives as Christians? The journey of *spiritual formation* takes us through seasons of soul searching. It begins with a stage of initial zeal

followed by an experience of eager learning, regrets and even bitterness. Pressures and temptations never anticipated in the earlier, simpler seasons of spiritual life eventually confront us. As it is on a long road trip, the journey with Jesus takes many turns, and we can't envision what awaits us around the bend. In particular, we don't foresee where the clash with sin and temptation may take us. But here this journey is considered by reviewing its three aspects. These are mind renewal, spiritual training and interacting with fellow believers.

3.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain the three aspects of spiritual formation journey .
2. Analyse and appreciate the ministry of the Holy Spirit in spiritual formation.
3. Apply in daily life the practical components of the aspects of spiritual formation journey.

1.3 Main Content

3.3.1 Mind Renewal

Spiritual formation must begin with a renewed mind. In order to experience mind renewal one should be aware of the three laws of Christian discipleship and obey them. These are:

First find out who Jesus is. Learn His adequacy for every human need. Next, find out who you are. Realize your inadequacy for serving in God's kingdom, no matter how earnestly you try. And finally find the Holy Spirit's power to displace your human weakness with the fullness of Christ. When we do these things, we begin to think differently; we have different emotions and our entire outlook is changed.

3.3.2 Spiritual Training

Spiritual Training may put into two categories. These are:

First, all works of devotion such as, public prayer, family prayer, private praying, searching the scriptures, meditating, fasting, and partaking of holy communion.

Secondly, all works of mercy, such as, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, entertaining the stranger, visiting those that are in prison, or sick, or variously afflicted; such as, the endeavoring to instruct the ignorant, to strengthen the wavering, to comfort the grieved, to encourage the tempted, or contribute in any manner to the saving of souls from death. These are the “fruits of repentance,” which are necessary to full sanctification. This is the way God has appointed His children to wait for complete salvation.

3.3.3 Involvement in Christian community

An old African proverb says, “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.” Quick-fix approaches to spiritual life driven by impatience and animated by bursts of energy can bring about impressive outward effects, but do they last? Without diminishing the importance of individual believers’ personal faith, all too often Christians fail to see the vital place of growing together in corporate discipleship. The body of Christ needs the spiritual contribution of each member, and each member needs the support of the body. Yet it’s important to clarify that the personal faith of individual believers is the essential footing of authentic Christian community. This may be the reason the writer to the Hebrews deemed it necessary to note: “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb 10:25 NIV). Thus associating and fellowship with fellow believers is essential for healthy spiritual formation.

3.4 Unit Summary

The journey of spiritual Formation is not a straight line. It involves ups and downs. Nevertheless for one who has entrusted one’s life to Christ one should always bear in mind that God is guiding one to victory.

MODULE ONE: INTEGRATED DELIVERABLES

Place the following integrated work in the Continuous Assessment Portfolio:

1. Learning Activities

Read “Formed in the Image of Christ” (page 7-24) in Keep R. Timothy. *Spiritual Formation: Lessons on Being Formed in the Image of Christ*. Cincinnati, Ohio:Shepherds Global Classroom, 2022.

Deliverable Assessment

Make a reading report on the above reading (one page) File your Reading Report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables.

2. Learning Activities

Read “Three Building Blocks of Assurance” (page 50-62) in Keep R. Timothy. *Spiritual Formation: Lessons on Being Formed in the Image of Christ*. (Cincinnati, Ohio:Shepherds Global Classroom, 2022), .

Deliverable Assessment

Make a one page report from the above reading (File the report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables).

3. Learning Activities

Read “A Renewed Mind Which Sets Our Direction” (page 29-38) in Keep R. Timothy. *Spiritual Formation: Lessons on Being Formed in the Image of Christ*. Cincinnati, Ohio:Shepherds Global Classroom, 2022.

3. Deliverable Assessment

Make a one page report from the above reading (File the report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables).

MODULE 2: SPIRITUAL FORMATION COMMON DISCIPLINES

In this module spiritual disciplines are reviewed. Hence our study is focused on four spiritual disciplines which are practiced by almost all Christians. These are in unit 4: Bible study and the methods that are used to absorb the Word of God. In unit 5: Prayer and how this conversation with God is practiced. Unit 6: Service to others, looking specifically at how sharing God's love in a tangible way enriches the giver's spiritual life. And unit 7: Fellowship whereby believers benefit each other through interaction with each other.

Unit 4: Spiritual Formation through the Word of God

Unit Structure

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

4.3 Main Content

4.3.1 Interference of Sin in handling God's word

4.3.2 Strategies for handling God's word

4.3.3 Bible Study should Impact the Learner's Life

4.4 Unit Summary

4.1 Introduction

At the center of the Christian life is an ongoing conversation between God and His children. The Lord initiates this communication, by speaking through His revealed Word, the Bible. God's written revelation is also accompanied by the witness of nature and the promptings of conscience (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:19–20; 2:15). Further, the Holy Spirit's activity in the believer's life is vital (Romans 8:1–11). But the Spirit's ministry surrounds and supports the witness of *God's Word*. As Jesus says in John 14:26, "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that *I have said to you*." God's Spirit works in people's hearts and minds to make them receptive, clearing away resistance and preparing them to embrace the Bible's teachings.

4.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain the value of God's word in the process of spiritual formation.
2. Analyse how our sinful nature influences the way we interpret God's word.
3. Evaluate some strategies for proper handling of God's Word.

4.3 Main Content

4.3.1 Interference of Sin in handling God's word

Indwelling sin causes intense, ongoing disruption to the conversation believers share with the Lord. In particular, it interferes with the way Christians receive and handle the Word of God, especially by causing them to be inclined to favor some passages and ignore others.

For example, when the Word confronts cherished habits, we're tempted to reinterpret a passage to dodge its clear message. The inclination of "the flesh" is to obscure or dismiss direct challenges issued by God, zeroing instead on isolated words of comfort. Over time, believers who aren't humble and honest before the Lord's penetrating searchlight (Psalm 139:23–24) will create mental blind spots to insulate the soul from "those upsetting texts."

Consider the various "prosperity gospel" teachers and their selective readings of the Bible that dwell on the prospect of gain while avoiding texts that consider God's purposes in our losses.

They declare repeatedly, “God wants you to be a winner in every area of life!” This means winning at work, in relationships, and in the financial area. In other words they assert that “God’s highest and best is that your whole life becomes a reflection of His abundant provision.”

However, this positive ideology leaves no room for God’s freedom to work for good through suffering (For instance see, Philippians 1:29; Hebrews 12:3–11). Further, muzzling the Bible this way leaves the believer defenseless when pain strikes: “How dare God deny his children their royal entitlements?” This is a setup of satan, which even the prosperity gospel preachers may not be aware of, to find fault with the Lord.

4.3.2 Strategies for Handling God’s word

In light of the serious danger of misusing the Bible because of human sinful nature’s damaging effects in our lives, what strategies can we adopt to minimize the harm?

The first and crucial step is to admit our self-serving tendency if we are to stay on target with the Word. We should face the disturbing reality that our hearts are corrupt and deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9), though our proud hearts always try to avoid this difficult admission. Hence you should read the word of God with humility, though it doesn’t mean acting like you never really know where you stand, but it does call for patience, an attitude of listening and learning, and an open mind to revisit and review one’s interpretation of biblical texts through the stages of spiritual maturation.

Next, it is also vital to grapple with the Word of God within the fellowship of the church. Many errors of personal weaknesses and blind spots can be identified and corrected as the Bible is embraced within the body.

4.3.3 Bible Study should Impact the Learner Life

Intellectual learning of the word of God begins to impact the learners’ life, when the Bible is understood on more than just an intellectual level. It must become a part of the readers’ being with the theology expressed through action. The power of Bible study is the foundational constant it provides for discerning what is right and wrong. Through studying the Word of God the believer is equipped with discerning the voice of God and the whispers of the devil.

4.3 Unit Summary

When the strategies for properly handling the word of God are utilized, the interference of Sin in handling God’s word is minimized and the learner’s life is impacted positively. Hence

if we are to benefit from the word of God we need to study scriptures while following proper principles for interpreting them.

MODULE 2: SPIRITUAL FORMATION COMMON DISCIPLINES

Unit 5: Spiritual Formation through Prayer

Unit Structure

5.1. Introduction

5.2. Learning Outcomes (LOs)

5.3. Main Content

5.3.1 Elements of Prayer

5.3.2 Hindarances to Prayer

5.4 Unit Summary

5.1 Introduction

Sinful human nature is also disruptive and destructive to the life of prayer. Prayer is central to being equipped with the “armor of God” for battle with the Enemy (Ephesians 6:18–20). So if Christians can be kept from meaningful prayer, by being kept busy or distracted or downcast, then Satan has a major advantage, and believers are seriously vulnerable to his attacks. It has been wisely pointed out that Satan’s cause is never in greater danger than when Christians pray! So, of course, he’ll fight back and do anything possible to disrupt, distract, and deflate praying Christians.

5.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain the importance of prayer in the process of Spiritual Formation
2. Analyze the elements of Prayer, practice them in a balanced way and teach others to do the same.
3. Assess the hindrance to Prayer and devise means to address them in order to have a more meaningful prayerlife.

5.3 Main Content

5.3.1 Elements of Prayer

The first element of prayer and the most widely made is *petitions*. A common way prayer disintegrates is when it’s reduced only to asking. Jesus teaches His people to ask, seek, and knock (Matthew 7:7–11), but in the big picture, in the Lord’s Prayer and throughout Scripture, *petitions* are just one element. The second element of prayer *praising* or adoring God, declaring from the heart that He is glorious. The third element is appealing to God for *forgiveness which implies confession* of sin. An attitude of repentance and remorse must be evident when sincere believers, conscious of their many sins, come into the presence of the Holy God through prayer. The fourth element is *thanksgiving which* is a widespread biblical motif that has a pivotal place in the believer’s prayers (1 Thessalonians 5:18). In fact, it’s hard to imagine how one’s relationship with the Lord can be healthy and whole if gratitude isn’t prominent in prayer. These four elements of prayer can be practiced privately and individually or publicly and corporately.

5.3.2 Hindrances to Prayer

Various facets of sin's lingering ugliness can rise up in believers' hearts and interfere with the prayer conversation. In fact, if we're running headlong into deliberate sin, we can't count on prayer as a technique to tidy up our mess. Note that to willingly run after sin's pleasures, imagining we can always repent and return to a good relationship with God is to misunderstand what it means to believe in Him. Hebrews 10:26 sternly warns against brazen sin: harboring sin and giving oneself over to it erode the soul and undermine the heart's capacity to turn back to God.

Further, numerous texts of Scripture indicate that our prayers hit the ceiling and fall flat on the floor if we're nurturing sin and remain unrepentant. For example, husbands who act sinfully and don't honor their wives find their prayers "hindered" (1 Peter 3:7). Calling on God with sinful motives results in receiving nothing (James 4:3). Authentic prayer begins when a heart is humbled, aroused by God's splendor, and moved to sincere confession and faith. But prayer games by willful sinners are mere noise.

5.4 Unit summary

In this unit hindrances to prayer which should be avoided are manifest. Then the elements of prayers which be practiced wholistically are explained to enable believers to have a balanced prayer life.

MODULE 2: SPIRITUAL FORMATION COMMON DISCIPLINES

Unit 6: Spiritual Formation through Service

Unit Structure

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

6.3 Main Content

6.3.1 Definition of Biblical Service

6.3.2 Christlike Servanthood

6.3.3 Self Righteous Service versus True Service

6.4 Unit Summary

6.1 Introduction

Biblical Service is caring for another person in Jesus' name. This service renders dignity and value to the person being served. They are worthy of care and respect. This kind of service is the call of the Christian. We are called first to serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and then to serve others in His name. Believers are invited to share their commitment to Christ with those in need through this practice of the discipline of service.

6.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain the biblical concept of service in relationship to spiritual formation.
2. Analyse Self-righteous Service versus Genuine Service.
3. Evaluate the benefits of Genuine Service.

6.3 Main Content

6.3.1 Definition of Biblical Service

Biblical service is rendered by one who has the mind of Christ, being characterized by humility and not self-promotion. This kind of service is provided by an individual who has complete devotion to the will of his or her master, who also is willing to partake of the weaknesses of those one is serving.

6.3.2 Christlike Servanthood

Biblical service is availed through Christ-like Servanthood through Discipline and Grace-Enabled Human Effort. The believer who serves thus has cultivated the mind of Christ through discipline though he or she receives it humbly as a divine gift.

6.3.3 Self-righteous Service versus True-service

Self-righteous Service come through human effort, is impressed with a big deal, requires external rewards, is very concerned with results, chooses whom to serve, is affected by moods, temporary, is insensitive, insists on serving even when not wanted, and ends up fracturing the body of Christ.

Yet true service flows from a relationship with God, doesn't distinguish between

the big and the small, is contented with being in the background, feels no need to calculate results, serves everyone, disciplines itself to meet needs even when it's hard, is a lifestyle, can withhold its service if necessary, and builds unity within the the body of Christ.

6.5 Unit Summary

Spiritual formation through service is being totally devoted to Christ by accepting Him not only as a personal savior but also as Lord. One should be willing to follow Christ's will even in situations where one's will is in conflict with that of Christ.

MODULE 2: SPIRITUAL FORMATION COMMON DISCIPLINES

Unit 7: Spiritual Formation through Fellowship

Unit Structure

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

7.3 Main Content

7.3.1 Interdependence within the Body

7.3.2 Mutual Ministry

7.3.3 Care for One Another Commands

7.4 Unit Summary

7.1 Introduction

The value of believers interacting with each other has a strong impact on the victory or perishing of a soul. Hence this necessitates family worship, small group meetings in agreed locations, congregational worship and corporate worship such as occurs in campmeetings. All these meetings and those related to them are very essential for a believer's spiritual formation.

7.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain the value of interacting with fellow believers.
2. Evaluate the injury caused to one's spirituality and to others by neglect of fellowshiping with fellow believers.
3. Demonstrate zeal to engage in mutual ministry and to encourage others to do the same.

7.3 Main Content

7.3.1 Independence within the Body

In New Testament the fellowship within the church is compared to the interdependence among the parts of a human body. For instance in 1 Corinthians 12:12–13, we read: *“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.”*

Here's the key concept: widely diverse members together form one body in which the whole needs the parts just as the parts need the whole, and as this is true of a physical body, so it is with the body of Christ, the church. Nevertheless, unity and diversity must be kept in a healthy balance as implied by Paul in the following text: *“As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. . . . Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it”* (12:20, 27).

The Christian community is a spiritual organism in which sincere followers of Jesus Christ can grow and thrive. Separation from other Christians, or even a lifestyle of casual or shallow friendships with other believers, doesn't match the vital, day-to-day interdependence God desires for his people as they make the heavenward trek together.

The analogy from the human body shows how God situates His people in a deep and dynamic fellowship which is something more than ordinary friendship. A vibrant life in the church, in which all members give and take, bless and receive blessing, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15), a community life of this caliber is the Lord's new normal for believers. That kind of close fellowship can make observers notice: "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

Jesus' prayer for future generations of disciples in John 17 takes this further: "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one,..., so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me" (17:20–23).

Why does Jesus pray for this? "*so that the world may believe*" that the Father sent the Son (17:21). A unified church is a public-relations victory for the gospel. *Believers living in humble, peaceable unity underscore the core message of God's love for humans.* To put it the other way around, the world scorns and mocks a divided church as a people who have nothing to say. Why? Unbelievers are already painfully aware through their own broken, divided lives, and relationships that all speeches about unity are mere theories.

However, since all believers continue to battle with sin all their lives, the body of Christ must be recognized as a spiritual organism made up *entirely* of flawed members. In Christ we're forgiven, and in Christ we're under construction and hopefully making some advances against the temptations of sin. But the fact remains that the body of Christ is a community of sinners, and when sinners live together in close fellowship, there's trouble.

7.3.2 Measures for Mutual Ministry

In the church, then, how do we support each other knowing that all givers and recipients of care are ailing and realizing that some are relatively healthy while others may be extremely ill? Several measures are in order.

First, *we need to seek God's help* to break through any proud resistance to seeing *ourselves* as unwell and in need of ongoing grace as lifelong sinners, the walking wounded, who are bound to cause damage within the body. This is the first step in moving toward corporate health.

Second, we must *cultivate an attitude of shared humility*. A humble spirit is vital if one is going to be molded into conformity to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). Leaders need to work hard to demonstrate and communicate that it's normal and urgent for people to receive correction and to live together in ways that are outward looking rather than self-focused.

When God's people recognize a humble spirit in the lives of their leaders, many barriers to spiritual maturation in the body are removed.

Third, it's urgent for believers that seek spiritual wellness to *keep their focus on God's Word*.

The Bible is our handbook for health in the church; it's God's message of how we can advance against sin and temptation. Think of the Scriptures as God's prescription for well-being in the body. Follow the Doctor's orders in order to get better!

A *fourth* vital step in supporting and serving each other in the body of Christ, in light of our illness, is to *be patient in seeking and receiving God's healing touch*. Sanctification is a lifelong process, and many of the changes that God's Spirit brings about among his people are gradual. Progress definitely can be made in this life; the Lord is active in the lives of His people, helping them to "work out" their salvation in God-honoring ways (Philippians 2:12–13). So believers should be hopeful people yet patient.

Fifth, God's people need to *learn practical skills to address corporate sin problems*. For example, believers could be trained to apply biblical principles of conflict resolution. In addition, Christians need to be involved in mentoring relationships so they, in turn, can help fashion the body life of believers in Christ-like ways.

Further, *belonging to an accountability group is another way to offer mutual support in the battle against sin in ways that cannot be done in larger gatherings*. It can be helpful to establish a set of questions that all group members answer when they meet, probing questions that ask a person to reveal how he or she is doing in the fight against particular sins.

7.3.3 Care For One Another Commands

The Greek pronoun translated "one another" occurs a hundred times in the New Testament, and in many instances in texts instructing believers how to treat each other. "One another" calls for reciprocal action which is a two-way ministry, of giving *and* receiving support.

Carrying out the various one-another commands of the New Testament requires settings and forums in which give-and-take ministry can occur, such as small groups. In a sense, then, I am "my brother's keeper."

We don't go it alone. Here are several NT one-another texts:

1. Show hospitality to one another (1 Peter 4:9)

2. Accept one another (Romans 15:7)
3. Be subject to one another (Ephesians 5:21)
4. Bear with one another (Ephesians 4:2)
5. Forgive one another (Colossians 3:13)
6. Confess your sins to one another (James 5:16)
7. Pray for one another (James 5:16)
8. Encourage one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
9. Confront one another (Colossians 3:16)
10. Stir up one another (Hebrews 10:24)

7. 4 Unit Summary

Spiritual Formation through fellowship involves each believer being a blessing to fellow believers through his or her God given gifts and also accepting being blessed by them. When this is done there is unity in diversity which is a fulfilment of Christ's prayer.

2. 4 Learning Activities

Read Crews Ripley, Heather. *Spiritual Disciplines of Early Adventists*. (Portland, Oregon: George Fox University, 2016), 88-96.

Deliverable Assessment

Make a one page report from the above reading. (File the report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables).

2.5 Learning Activities

Read Crews Ripley, Heather. *Spiritual Disciplines of Early Adventists*. (Portland, Oregon: George Fox University, 2016), "Prayer" 69-71, 96-98, 134-137.

Deliverable Assessment

Make a two (2) page reading report on the reading the above reading. File the report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables.

2.6 Learning Activities

Read “THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF SERVICE” (182-188) in the book: Keep, R .Timothy. *Spiritual Formation: Lessons on Being Formed in the Image of Christ*. Cincinnati, Ohio:Shepherds Global Classroom, 2022.

Deliverable Assessment

AMake a reading report on the above reading (one page). File the report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables.

2.7 Learning Activities

Read “Methods of Teaching Spiritual Disciplines” (page 47-62) in the book: Ripley Heather, Crews. *Spiritual Disciplines of Early Adventists*. Portland, Oregon: George Fox Univervasity, 2016.

Deliverable Assessment

Make a reading report of two pages (2) from the above reading. File the report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables.

REFERENCES

Keep R. Timothy. *Spiritual Formation: Lessons on Being Formed in the Image of Christ*. Cincinnati, Ohio:Shepherds Global Classroom, 2022.

Heather Ripley, Crews. *Spiritual Disciplines of Early Adventists*. Portland, Oregon: George Fox Univervasity, 2016.

MODULE 3: SPIRITUAL FORMATION UNCOMMON DISCIPLINES

Unit 8: Spiritual Formation through Solitude and Meditation

Unit Structure

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

8.3 Main Content

8.3.1 The Importance of Solitude and Meditation in Spiritual Formation

8.3.2 Evaluation of the benefits of Solitude and Meditation in Spiritual Formation

8.4 Unit Summary

8.1 Introduction

Solitude is simply withdrawing from people in order to be alone with God and draw closer to him. As a spiritual discipline, solitude is not simply about being alone, but about being alone with the Lord. Solitude is a fast from friendships in order to focus on our primary friendship with God.

While **Meditation** is pondering God's Word by talking to oneself. We meditate on scripture when we prayerfully turn to specific portions of God's Word over and over in our minds until the Holy Spirit begins to quicken it to our heart; until our heart receives its instruction, warning, and correction; until our soul tastes its transforming sweetness. As in every discipline, meditation requires the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit.

8.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain both Solitude and Meditation in relationship to Spiritual Formation.
2. Evaluate the benefits of both Solitude and Meditation in the process of Spiritual Formation.

8.3 Main Content

8.3.1 The Importance of Solitude and Meditation in Spiritual Formation

Solitude should be understood not just as withdrawing to a physical place, but to a mental place as well. It is shutting the door of our mind, for a little while, to the outside world, in order to renew the inner man. If we think of solitude in this way, then even a crowded place could become a place of solitude when physical solitude cannot be found.

Jesus utilized solitude to rejuvenate His spiritual life. According to Luke, “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed” (5:16 NIV). Why did he do it? Because serving people depleted his spiritual resources, which needed to be replenished constantly. Though he only had a few years to finish his earthly work, Jesus intentionally arranged His life to slip away from His followers and to be alone with his Father. If Jesus needed it. Don’t you need it too?

Biblical meditation is not emptying the mind but filling it with God’s Word.

Eastern meditation such as which may also be referred to as yoga and Transcendental Meditation teaches mind-emptying and is very dangerous. The mind that is left empty will be inhabited by demonic lies or even demons themselves (Matt. 12:44-45). Biblical meditation is focused on filling the mind with the Word of God, like psalmist who exclaimed, “Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day”(119:97).

8.3.2 Evaluation of the benefits of Solitude and Meditation in Spiritual Formation.

In **solitude**, we lose our unhealthy attachment to people, get our eyes off the and the ways they hurt or disappoint us and put them back on the Lord. In true solitude, we offer the Holy Spirit our full attention. He realigns our perspective and priorities to his and pours fresh peace, love, and joy into our hearts. In solitude, we find grace to return to our communities and responsibilities with divine wisdom and energy to make a lasting impact.

Meditation provides believers the opportunity to be washed by the Word of God (Eph. 5:26).

The Word changes the way we think and behave. The light of the Word (Psalm 119:105), exposes every hidden sin and every destructive lie of the Devil. The Word saturates our souls regularly with truth until we are trained to think and act like Jesus.

Thus the disciplines of **solitude** and **meditation** need to be practiced together for maximum spiritual benefit, because when one seeks to be alone with the Lord, the mind should be focused on God's word to avoid distractions.

8.5 Unit Summary

Solitude and meditation are spiritual disciplines which are not common among all Christians yet they are very essential for spiritual health. Solitude among Christians is not simply being alone but taking time to be alone with God. Similarly Christian meditation is not just emptying the mind but it is listening to God to get direction for our lives by being focused on His word.

MODULE 3: SPIRITUAL FORMATION UNCOMMON DISCIPLINES

Unit 9: Spiritual Formation through Fasting and Simplicity

Unit Structure

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

9.3 Main Content

9.3.1 Spiritual Formation through Fasting

9.3.2 Spiritual Formation through Simplicity

9.4 Unit Summary

9.1 Introduction

Both *Fasting* and *Simplicity* are bound together in this unit due to the fact that they share the common element of self denial in their being practised. *Scriptural fasting* is abstaining from food, or exercising moderation in food intake, for spiritual purposes.

While the spiritual discipline of *simplicity* is about doing our part to make our lives more spiritually and practically efficient. This is ridding ourselves of everything which is stealing our joy, removing from our lives the clutter which is troubling us, the chaos which is distracting us, the debt which is drowning us, and the activities which are controlling us.

9.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain the value of fasting and simplicity in the process of Spiritual Formation.
2. Apply the insights drawn from the study of both fasting and simplicity in daily life to facility the process of Spiritual formation.

9.3 Main Content

9.3.1 Spiritual Formation through Fasting

Fasting is one of the most spiritually transforming, but also one of the most difficult and therefore neglected of, all the spiritual disciplines. When practiced with a sincere heart and combined with prayer, it is one of the most effective means of renewing our hunger for God, capturing wandering thoughts, restraining wayward desires, burning up the chaff of self, clarifying direction, receiving fresh spiritual insight from God's Word, and retaining

the power of the Holy Spirit. in life. Scripture doesn't directly comand fasting, but it assumes its practice among Christians.

For instance we read in Matthew: “And *when you fast*, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. But *when you fast*, comb your hair and wash your face” (6:16-17 NLT). In this text it is clear to us that Jesus assumes that every believer will fast.

9.3.2 Spiritual Formation through Simplicity

The discipline of simplicity is the discipline of focusing on God's priorities and arranging one's lifestyle accordingly. It begins with an inner attitude of detachment from all but life's highest goal, which should be, *knowing and serving God*. It results in lifestyle choices consistent with this attitude.

God calls every Christian to an inner simplicity, a single-minded love for God and people and a single-minded devotion to seeking first his kingdom. But inner simplicity will only be sustained when we intentionally arrange our daily lives in simple ways. Many Christians want to live more free and contented lives, but the bad habits of over-scheduling, over-speaking, over-committing, over-spending, over-collecting, over-working and even over-serving prevent them from the life they desire.

The power of simplicity in spiritual formation. The purpose of simplicity is simply to set us free. The simplification of our lifestyle will set us free from the tyranny of materialism and enable us to invest more and more time and resources into God's kingdom, and it will deliver us from bondage to the approval of men. The simplification of our work and ministry will set

us free to do what we have been called and equipped to do, and to do it better. The simplification of our words will free us from making promises and commitments we can't keep and enable us to keep the promises we do make.

3.4 Unit Summary

The practice of fasting and simplicity are not very common among all Christians. Though the discipline of fasting is known by almost all Christians yet very few of them practice it.

Further, it seems that many Christians may not even be aware of the discipline of of simplicity. It is worth noting that both fasting and simplicity require self denial for one to be focused on God to know His will and to obey Him.

MODULE THREE: INTEGRATED DELIVERABLES

3.8 Learning Activities

Read “Defining Classic Spiritual Discipline” (page 133-138) in Keep R. Timothy. *Spiritual Formation: Lessons on Being Formed in the Image of Christ*. Cincinnati, Ohio:Shepherds Global Classroom, 2022.

Deliverable Assessment

Make a one (1) page reading report on the above reading. File the report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables.

3.9 Learning Activities

Read “Defining Classic Spiritual Discipline” (page 138-146) in Keep R. Timothy. *Spiritual Formation: Lessons on Being Formed in the Image of Christ*. Cincinnati, Ohio:Shepherds Global Classroom, 2022.

Deliverable Assessment

Make a one (1) page reading report on the above reading. File the report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables.

REFERENCES

Keep R. Timothy. *Spiritual Formation: Lessons on Being Formed in the Image of Christ*. Cincinnati, Ohio:Shepherds Global Classroom, 2022.

Ripley Heather, Crews. *Spiritual Disciplines of Early Adventists*. Portland, Oregon: George Fox University, 2016.

MODULE FOUR: UNDERSTANDING GOD AND SELF

Unit 10: Divine Sovereignty and Sinful Humanity

Unit Structure

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

10.3 Main Content

10.3.1 God does whatever He Pleases

10.3.2 God allows sin to linger in our lives to keep us humble

10.4 Unit Summary

10.1 Introduction

It has been observed that the single greatest influence in our spiritual formation is our view of God. Your view of God is greatly impacting your life right now. It is impacting your view of yourself, your relationships with others and your relationship with God. Hence the need to ponder upon how we view God.

10.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain some attributes of God as described in the bible and their impact on a believer's spiritual formation.
2. Evaluate how important knowing God properly is to spiritual formation.

10.3 Main Content

How can divine sovereignty and ongoing sin coexist? What kind of supreme authority is it that tolerates perpetual mutiny? Is the reach of God's ruling "arm" limited, thus accounting for the pockets of defiance that persist in believers' hearts? Is genuine sovereignty even a possibility when sin still festers? If it is, how does it account for the pervasive and harrowing effects of sin? Can the notion of God's supremacy be so elastic that it encompasses motives and actions that contradict his reign? Why would a sovereign God allow history to unfold in such a way that sin endures, like a clinging parasite, in the hearts of his people?

10.3.1 Our God Does Whatever He Pleases

Let's note some biblical facts about God, who He is and what He is like. The Lord is free and unlimited: "Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases" (Psalm 115:3). His "hand" is not restrained (Numbers 11:23). "Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps" (Psalm 135:6). "Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but

it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand” (Proverbs 19:21). “The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will” (Proverbs 21:1).

Isaiah takes up this theme at length: “The LORD of hosts has sworn: ‘as I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand’” (Isaiah 14:24). Similarly, “There is none who can deliver from my hand; I work, and who can turn it back?” (Isaiah 43:13). “I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I equip you, though you do not know me, so that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things” (Isaiah 45:5–7). “My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose” (Isaiah 46:10). God’s limitless freedom and sovereignty undergird his work as Creator and Sustainer of all that is: “It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth, with the men and animals that are on the earth, and I give it to whomever it seems right to me” (Jeremiah 27:5). “Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you” (Jeremiah 32:17). If God is all this powerful, why doesn’t He free His children, who have accepted salvation, from sin fully so that they live holy lives here?

10.3.2 God allows sin to linger in our lives to keep us humble

It’s important to remember the biblical truth that God orchestrates all things, even sin’s lingering existence, toward his ultimately good purposes. In other words, it’s not as though the Lord has compromised his moral purity or sovereign power by bringing sanctification about gradually or by allowing his people to face besetting sins. Romans 8:28 is a pivotal text here: “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” Note that sin does not work for good the impenitent. It works for their condemnation, but it works for good to those that love God.

It has been pointed that in some specific instances God allows His chosen ones frequently to relapse into infirmities to keep them humble. For example Peter relapsed often, and so did Jonah, and this happened that they may see their own inability to stand, to resist temptation or overcome sin so that they may be taken off from all false confidences, and rest wholly upon God, and always upon God.

Similarly it is contended that one reason the Lord doesn't remove sin from our flesh when we come to Christ is that its presence motivates us to call on his resources to combat the internal enemy and we mature by coping with the Enemy through our weaknesses.

10.4 Unit Summary

God being Sovereign does what ever He pleases including using our sinfulness to benefit us. His understanding is far beyond ours whereby we may not fully comprehend why He permits some things which we view as being bad. He can over-rule circumstances to bring good out of evil.

MODULE FOUR: UNDERSTANDING GOD AND SELF

Unit 11: Spiritual Formation and Leadership.

Unit Structure

11.1 Introduction

11.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

11.3 Main Content

11.3.1 Marks of Maturing Leaders

11.3.2 Exercising Spiritual Leadership

11.3.3 Transparent Leadership

11.3.4 Plurality Leadership

11.4 Unit Summary

11.1 Introduction

Youth leaders, deacons, elders, campus ministers and pastors like all other followers of Christ, are not only children of grace but they are also sinners greatly needing ongoing *spiritual formation*. Honest leaders see all kinds of sins, such as pride, fear, envy, lust, anger, and laziness in themselves. They grapple with regret, insecurity, greed, doubt, and every other pressure and temptation the Enemy throws at them. This is no secret in our electronic age in which notorious moral failures are broadcast far and wide.

11. 2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Comprehend that Spiritual leaders like other believers still grapple with besetting sin.
2. Analyse the Sacredness of Spiritual Leadership in Comparison to Secular leadership.
3. Evaluate the honor entrusted to a Spiritual Leader and the importance of guarding it.

11.3 Main Content

11.3.1 Marks of Maturing Leaders

Although all believers struggle with sin, the battle for Christian leaders is uniquely trying. The expectations placed upon them, to have answers, lead effectively, solve problems, expand the ministry, know God's will, and model holiness, along with the isolation and loneliness that often come with leadership, can greatly intensify the ongoing spiritual battle. They have to hassle with where to seek for help, whom to confide, how much transparency is in order to help people relate to them. Yet it is a fact that churches cannot advance spiritually any further than the point their pastors have reached.

Hence, it is advisable to choose pastors for their sanctity and devotion and not for skills and dynamism. Some level of giftedness and practical capability is needed, of course, but the key traits of a pastor who's fit to lead God's people are spiritual.

Therefore, those engaged in the process of appointing spiritual leaders need to be patient enough to dig deep and probe carefully in order to find a person who has truly wrestled with the Lord and faced his or her own twisted heart self-exaltation. This should be someone who has got a healthy suspicion of self and seeks accountability alongside other maturing Christian leaders. In the case of pastoral leadership, believers need to be aware that they *are sinners, and they are accepting a sinner to lead them*.

If both the pastor and the believers being led know themselves well, that their hearts are deceitful and that they can deceive themselves (Jeremiah 17:9), and are willing to speak truthfully to each other, an atmosphere of grace and humble support can be created within which to battle sin and pursue holiness together.

11.3.2 Exercising Spiritual Leadership

Since it is clear that Satan strategically targets pastors and all spiritual leaders with a particular intensity, it is wise to follow Paul's example where he appeals the Ephesians *to lift him up in prayer*: "To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and *also for me*, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak" (6:18–20). In other words a pastor should solicit for prayers from the people he or she pastors that the Lord may enable one to fulfil one's pastoral services efficiently.

Ministers face exceptional pressures and are held to special standards (2 Corinthians 11:28; James 3:1), so in this high calling they greatly need God's protection and spiritual support.

11.3.3 Transparent Leadership

Pastors, elders, and lay leaders should openly admit their need of God's renewing grace and ask people to pray for their progress in Christlikeness. When such transparency is in place within a fellowship, leaders can go further and speak of their accountability relationships, support groups, and other measures they take to battle sin.

This combination of humility and zeal for holiness can lead members to join their pastors in the quest for the joy of holiness. By contrast, when leaders appear as saints, people may be impressed, but they'll have a hard time identifying with such heroes and they will find it hard to gain hope and inspiration from them.

Accountability Relationships: Another key measure for fighting sin as a leaders is to form accountability relationships with other believers. The clergy, ideally should form them with other clergy from outside their own congregation. Such partnerships help leaders gain ground in the fight against sin by challenging each other on a regular basis. Commonly within such groups there are pointed questions to be asked of all members, for example regarding one's devotional life, key relationships, including marital faithfulness and other friendships, thoughts, viewing habits, use of time, financial practices, and more. Being committed to accountability is a way of saying before the Lord and his people that you need and invite the support of others. Though accountability relationships can easily degenerate into legalism, we should keep the gospel at the center of all our interactions to avoid this danger.

11.3.4 Plurality Leadership

Another measure to help safeguard leadership is plurality, that is, leading together and not in isolation. New Testament passages about elders speak in terms of multiple elders for the local church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). This need not be understood as discarding all pastoral responsibilities; there's still need for a clergy to preside over the elders in a local church. The

key is to make sure the vital work of prayerfully leading the church, or directing a Christian ministry, is not entirely handed over to an individual.

Consider the wisdom of Proverbs: “Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14). “For by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory” (Proverbs 24:6). Assigning the tasks of teaching and guiding God’s people to a team of spiritually qualified leaders, frankly, is a crucial step for fighting sin and growing in holiness. By contrast, when a pastor resists the partnership of duly appointed elders who can assist and support in one in work, and who can help encourage and caution him as a pastor, it signals misguided thinking and risky isolation that endanger both leader and people. Believers should be on the lookout for this red flag of isolated leaders.

11.4 Unit Summary

Mature spiritual leaders understand that they are sinful beings leading fellow sinners. They also grapple with sin like all other human beings. Thus they sympathize and empathize with the people they lead. They set examples in being transparent and accountable to the people they lead. They do not become dictators over the people they lead instead they practice servant leadership whereby they bear in mind that they are not to seek to be served instead they are to serve others. They also practice plurality leadership whereby important decisions are made collectively with stakeholders.

MODULE FOUR: UNDERSTANDING GOD AND SELF

Unit 12: Spiritual Formation through Temperance

Unit Structure

12.1 Introduction

12.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

12.3 Main Content

12.3.1 Appetite Control

12.3.2 Temperaments Control

12.3.3 Proper use of Time

12.3.4 Setting Boundaries and Convictions

12.4 Unit Summary.

12.1 Introduction

Temperance is abstinence from harmful things to health which also effects spirituality and using the good ones in moderation. However, spiritual growth cannot be separated from self control. In this unit we are discussing areas where personal training or self control is vital to spiritual formation. These area include exercising discipline in appetite, temerament, proper utilization of time, and setting boundaries in relationships.

12. 2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Comprehend the importance of temperance in the process of spiritual formation.
2. Analyse way on how to control appetite and temperament, the proper utilization of time, setting boundaries in relationships and how to put these disciplines into practice.
3. Demonstrate the ability to detect injurious things and abstain from them while using good things moderately.

12.3 Main Content

12.3.1 Appetite Control

Since our appetites determine the direction of our lives we need to find ways of controlling them, otherwise they will control us. Therefore, mastering our appetites is vital for spiritual formation. Failure to control appetite is gluttony. But it worthy noting that gluttony is not just a food problem. Gluttony by definition is simply consuming more than is needed, and thus, it is an attitude which can be applied to any appetite, whether it be food, money, possessions, or power. This implies that we need to utilize even good things in moderation.

12.3.3 Temperaments Control

Solomon observed that it is better “to be patient than powerful; better to have self-control than to conquer a city” (Prov. 16:32 NLT). He went on to assert that, “A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down walls (Prov. 25:28 NLT).

In our interactions with people in all spheres of life such as in our families, neighbourhoods, schools, place of work, on the way as we travel, and even in our places of worship provocations to anger, or irritability are inevitable. Therefore, we need to find ways of controlling our temperaments or emotions when provoked.

12.3.4 Proper use of Time

God has given all of us equal time. We all have 24 hours in a day, seven days in a week and the same number of days in each month and year. The differences and outcome of lives in most cases depends on how we use this gift of time the Lord has bestowed upon us. Nevertheless discipline in the use of time doesn’t mean that we fill every moment with busy activity, but that we learn to fill every moment with the most excellent good. If the most excellent thing you can do at a certain moment is simply sleeping, then sleep. Don’t scroll aimlessly through the internet. If the most excellent thing is sitting in silent meditation or prayer, then do that, rather than something less. If the most excellent thing at a certain moment is worship, or study, or reading, or practicing your guitar, or writing, or washing clothes, or learning a second language, or preaching the gospel, then discipline yourself to do that most excellent thing. If the most excellent thing you can do is give tender care to your sick child, cook a meal, provide income for your family, build a house, converse with a friend or colleague, or enjoy the beauties of God’s world, whatever the most excellent thing is at any given moment, train yourself to do it, rather than something else. And we should add to this, that to redeem the time means that whatever our hand finds to do, we do it with all our might, in the name of the Lord Jesus, with thanksgiving, and for His glory. If we train ourselves to do this, we will redeem our short days on earth.

12.3. 5 Setting Boundaries and Convictions

One of the signs of spiritual maturity is that we no longer ask, “What does the law allow?” or “What can I get by with?” but instead start asking, “Is this helpful to me?” and “Will this bring me closer to God or make me a better follower of Christ?” One of the most important disciplines

is the formation of personal boundaries and convictions in our lives, boundaries and convictions related to personal purity, friendships, dress, music, entertainment, the Lord's Day, and others.

Points to Remember about Personal Boundaries and Convictions

1. These specific convictions and personal boundaries are not necessarily for every one. We might not be able to find a specific verse for them in the Bible, except in principle. So we must never demand them of others or use our convictions to judge others.
2. These personal boundaries and convictions are based on biblical principles, but the specific applications are unique to you. As the Lord makes you aware of your weaknesses, you develop personal boundaries and convictions which will help preserve your passion for God.
3. These personal boundaries and convictions must be formed in love for others. There are plenty of times in our Christian walk that we will limit our freedoms for the sake of love. Mature Christians are willing to lay down their rights in this way.
4. Personal boundaries and convictions must be motivated by joy. Thoughtlessly following church tradition or the convictions of good people, when those convictions are not in your heart, will only lead to bondage.

12.4 Unit Summary

We need to lead temperate lives where we should practice self in the area of appetite not only for food but in other areas of life such in acquisition of wealth, sexual passion satisfaction, and ambition for power and fame in all forms. We need to control our temperaments since provocative circumstances are inevitable in life. We need to utilize our time profitably knowing that it is a limited commodity bearing in mind that we are here on earth for a short time. We also need to cultivate our convictions on vital issues guided by scripture and set boundaries especially in our relationships.

MODULE FOUR: UNDERSTANDING GOD AND SELF

Unit 13: Spiritual Formation through Suffering

Unit Structure

13.1 Introduction

13.2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

13.3 Main Content

13.3.1 Believers have been called to suffer with Christ.

13.3.2 Benefits of Suffering

13.3.3 Prosperity Theology and Suffering

13.4 Unit Summary

13.1 Introduction

According to scriptures suffering is a reality in this world, whereby even believers undergo it. For instance Peter asserts “Therefore let those who *suffer according to the will* of God commit their souls *to Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator” (1 Peter 4:19 NKJ). Note that this text says there are people who suffer according to God’s will. The story of Job in the Old Testament also show that though the suffering he underwent was inflicted upon him by satan, yet it was God permitted.

Paul also revealed, “For I consider that the *sufferings of this present time* are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom 8:18).

Even Jesus told his disciple, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have *tribulation*; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world ” (Joh 16:33). Thus Christ warned His disciples in advance that they will not be exempted from suffering as long as they are still in this world.

13. 2 Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain the key scripture passages on suffering

2. Analyze God's primary purpose for allowing suffering
3. Evaluate the benefits of suffering.
4. Assess prosperity theology in the light of scriptures on suffering

13.3 Main Content

13.3.1 Believers have been called to suffer with Christ.

According to the word of God, one of the reasons God called us is to suffer. Note, "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (1Pe 2:21 NKJ). Thus the early disciples understood this well and it is likely to be one of the reasons they managed to endure suffering patiently.

13.3.2 Benefits of Suffering

Suffering can turn us from a dangerous direction and put us on the right pass. "Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word" (Psalm 119:67 NKJ). Further, suffering can enable us to be victorious over sin, "Be ready to suffer, too. For if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished with sin (1Peter 4:1 NLT).

13.3.3 Prosperity Theology and Suffering

Prosperity theology, sometimes referred to as the prosperity gospel, the health and wealth gospel, or the gospel of success, is a religious belief among some, professing, Christians, who hold that financial blessing and physical well-being are always the will of God for them; and that faith, positive speech, and donations to religious causes will increase one's material wealth.

The proclaimers of the prosperity gospel also assert that all who have faith in Christ will be healed miraculously of any kind of illness or physical deformity. But "Does God still heal, or work miracles, or sometimes give material blessings to his people? Can Christians on this side of

eternity claim physical and material blessing as their right? Is physical healing promised to all on this side of eternity, through the atoning death of Jesus Christ?"

God does as He pleases. Sometimes He can heal the sick dramatically in response to prayer, but it is not the normal in all circumstances. However, Since many Christians are resistant to suffering, prosperity theology has become prevalent.

In conclusion, we can say suffering is a tool held in the hand of a good and loving God. Embrace it. Sometimes He uses it to conform you and me into the image of His Son. We should surrender our lives to Him and let Him sanctify us as He deems best including suffering. Remembering this will bring peace to our hearts and hasten our transformation.

13.4 Unit Summary

Though there promises of blessings being experienced even in this life by those who trust God in scriptures, there are also biblical texts which show that believers will not be exempted from suffering while they are still here on earth. Infact there are texts which reveal that christians will be persecuted for their fair. Other scripture show that at times God permits His people to undergo suffering as way of leading them to holiness. Hence prosperity gospel proclaimers may give false hope to people when they do not present balanced biblical message that realistically show that both blessings and suffering in this life can be the lot for even genuine believers.

MODULE FOUR: INTEGRATED DELIVERABLES

4.10 Learning Activities

Read “ Spiritual Formation through Knowing God” (page 63-76) in Keep R. Timothy. *Spiritual Formation: Lessons on Being Formed in the Image of Christ. Cincinnati, Ohio: Sherpherds Global Classroom, 2022.*

Deliverable Assessment

Make a one (1) reading report on the above reading. File the report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables.

4. 11 Learning Activities

Listen to this Video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCJCX1D-Kcc>

Deliverable Assessment

Make a two (2) page report from the above Video. Indicate what you agree with in it and what you disagree with in it. File your answer in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables.

4.12 Learning Activities

Read “ Appetite, Time, Temperament, and Personal Convictions” (page 209-224) in Keep R. Timothy. *Spiritual Formation: Lessons on Being Formed in the Image of Christ. Cincinnati, Ohio: Sherpherds Global Classroom, 2022.*

Deliverable Assessment

Make a two page (2) reading report on the above reading. File the report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables./

4:13 Learning Activities

Read “ Formed Through Suffering” (page 227-244) in Keep R. Timothy. *Spiritual Formation: Lessons on Being Formed in the Image of Christ. Cincinnati, Ohio: Sherpherds Global Classroom, 2022.*

Deliverable Assessment

Make a two (2) page reading report on the above reading. File the report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables.

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MODULE FIVE: ENGAGEMENT PRACTICUM

In this module you are required to identify a hindarance in the church where you attend services that is preventing believers from growing spiritually. Then use the knowledge you have acquired in this study to address it in order to help them overcome it so as to grow spiritually. Then write a report.

Unit Structure

1. Introduction
2. Learning Outcomes (LOs)
3. Main Content
4. Learning Activities
5. Deliverable Assignment

1. Introduction

This module engages students in identifying, analyzing, and responding to a spiritual growth hindrance in a church context. Students are supposed to apply biblical, Spiritual Formation concepts, and pastoral sensitivity to guide people grow from one level of spirituality to a higher one. The module emphasizes comprehending the importance of spirituality and the need of practising the disciplines which are essential for spiritual victory in the lives of Christians.

2. Learning Outcomes (LOs)

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Identify and describe some challenges that prevent believers from growing well spiritually.
2. Develop a tool to analyze the spirituality of believers.
3. Develop and present informed recommendations grounded in Scripture on how to help people grow spiritually.

3. Main Content

This module requires students to identify a spiritual formation challenge within a contemporary congregation. A needs assessment is the primary tool that will gather information about spiritual challenges in the church. Data collection methods could be quantitative or qualitative. There are several methods of collecting data for needs assessments.

- i. **Questionnaires & Surveys:** Questionnaires are distributed to community members in such a manner as to cover as many members as possible. Surveys can also be conducted digitally through emails, or by phones.
- ii. **One on One Interviews:** Interviews are particularly useful when information is required from key informants in the church. These should be church members who are knowledgeable about certain aspects of the church such as pastors,

- iii. **Congregational Meetings:** Congregational meetings provide a forum that is open. They are formal, planned gatherings that have an agenda and topics for discussion and rules of participation. They are an effective way of gathering wide ranging and diverse views from the church members.
- iv. **Focus Groups:** These are meetings of a specified number of people which focus on particular topics or a few related topics. Focus groups of people can be differentiated by gender, age or occupation. For example, women only focus group, or youth, married couples, singles, and single parents. Similar to congregational meetings, focus groups are planned and have a specific agenda. However, there is a limited number of participants, although as many focus groups as are needed can be convened.

The need assessment should consider the following;

- 1. **Consent:** Consent is a fundamental principle that is critical for building trust among people. This process includes informing individuals about the purpose, scope, and potential impact of the proposed activities, as well as respecting their right to make an informed decision about their participation.
- 2. **Confidentiality:** Confidentiality refers to the protection of sensitive information shared by participants. People have a right to confidentiality when participating in any activity. Therefore students must explain what information will be collected, how it will be used, who it will be shared with, and what their rights and options are. They should also protect and store data. Confidentiality promotes trust, respect, and positive emotional wellbeing, and encourages people to come forward with issues and concerns.

4 Learning Activities

Practicum Step 1: Spirituality growth hindrance identification

Students identify a spiritual formation hindrance within a selected congregation.

Practicum Step 2: Proposal Development

Submission of a brief proposal to district pastor, outlining the spirituality growth hindrance, location, and methodology to be followed to address it.

Practicum Step 3: Field Engagement

Data collection through observation, interviews, and interaction with stakeholders . This may be done on church premises, in homes, places of work or wherever it is convenient for both of you.

Practicum Step 5: Ethical Analysis

Application of biblical and spirituality frameworks to interpret findings

Practicum Step 6: Intervention/Recommendation

Development of spiritual formation recommendations or awareness strategies

Practicum Step 7: Report Writing

Compilation of a structured practicum report.

13.5 Deliverable Assessment

A practicum report (10 Pages) is expected to be written. File the report in the portfolio. Put a cover page to distinguish it from other deliverables.

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