Leslie Eyma, Jr.- **Reading Report # 4 – "**Dark Night of the Soul" – St. John of the Cross 4/28/21
Dr. Robert Reimer CD770: Engaging & Responding to the Holy Spirit: - Spring, 2021

Dark Night of the Soul specified the various methods the Lord progressively uses [the "dark night" (eg., trials and tribulations)] to repeatedly strip the Believer's soul of "spiritual imperfections" (St. John, 1959, 19.) The ultimate aims of the dark night are a Believer whose "soul [is] affectioned, ["united"] and enkindled in love toward God" (St. John, 1959, 35, 48.)

This book had three concepts which fascinated me: (1) "God draws them forth from the state of beginners… to set them in the state of progressives… to the end that, after passing through it, they may arrive at the state of the perfect, which is that of the Divine union of the soul with God." Looking over my Christian walk, I have learned, as St. John described, how God meets us where we are in our given state. Thus, the types of trials the Lord used earlier in my Christian walk are different than the present. Also, St. John noted how God leads and tailors the "dark night" experiences to "… purify [us] from all these imperfections so that He may bring [us] farther onward" (St. John, 1959, 21, 44.) In my beginning walk, I thought I must have done something wrong for God to "discipline" me through trials. Now, I cannot view trials as God solely using them to punish me. He can use them as a "continual exercise" or future preparation (St. John, 1959, 44.) I just have to be cognizant of which particular state I am in and respond to the Lord accordingly; (2) "All habits, both good and bad, are brought into subjection, and thus, until these are purged" (St. John, 1959, 48.) The reason why this struck me is because it is easier, in the flesh, to try to avoid the process or, seek distractions in the midst. Yet, a soul seeking "inward ease and peace" during this process is futile (St. John, 1959, 35.) Like Job, He is Sovereign and His end goal(s) for us will prevail. I am learning, as St. John described, how God sees our weakness and imperfections, and replaces them with "habits" of strength. (St. John,

1959, 18.) This book has affected my current ministry context in various ways. Initially, I was weak in the areas of my devotional time with Him. But, I am learning to allow Him to refine the habits of daily meeting with Him or Scripture reading. I consider these strength habits to be a part of His refiner's fire. Yet, this means I have to be careful in my ministry. St, John discerned even acts I do for the Lord (eg., service, "spiritual exercises" - "good" things) can be corrupted and become spiritual vices (St. John, 1959, 19, 40.) A similar thing happened when I was involved in too many ministries at one point. As St. John noted, I incorrectly thought my "own satisfaction and pleasure [were] the satisfaction and service of God."] (St. John, 1959, 19.) Instead, the Lord allowed me to become "burnt out" while serving Him to learn the good habit of spiritual balance; (3) The dark night sufferings bring God's enduring strength and creates a soulish hunger to "seek God without ceasing." (St. John, 1959, 76-77, 83.) [(St. John, 1959, 19.) Regarding the reading and how they impacted my theology of the Holy Spirit, I am learning I cannot prevail in this walk alone. I used to think He was absent during my sufferings. Yet, this is part of the perfecting process to unify my "soul with God" (St. John, 1959, 48.) Like Zechariah 4:6, I am understanding how to rely on His Strength to endure. It is part of our godly authority to know and experience continual fillings and exercise of the Holy Spirit's power and authority. I learned, if I engaged in non-stop ministry, I will become depleted: physically and spiritually. Over time, I am learning which spiritual disciplines strengthen me and create a continued hunger and thirst for His righteousness.

One aspect of the book I disagreed with was the author's statements and stance on purgatory. I disagreed with this as purgatory is not scripturally sound. Hebrews 9:27 states: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

With integrity, I have read this book thoroughly and entirely– 100% - LE