

REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM OF INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL FORMATION

CHAPTER 5 --INTIMACY: GOD'S DESIRE FOR ME

Thirsty hearts are those whose longings have been awakened by the touch of God within them. This is a quote by A.W. Tozer that sets the tone of the chapter.

Desire is another word for hunger. Unless there is sighing longing, hungering and thirsting, and perhaps even tears of desire, you have probably not yet reached prevailing prayer.

INTENTIONALITY IS THE KEY

Intimacy does not occur haphazardly.

God is waking us morning by morning to listen like one being instructed.

EMBRACE AMBIGUITY

Oftentimes in our relationship with God, we put demands on ourselves that are not from God.

In every relationship, there is the joy of being together. There is usually conversation but when it is quiet, the moment is simply enjoyed together.

Every encounter in the present of God will not be a fireworks explosion.

We live in an instant society where whatever we want is at our fingertips.

We have lost an integral part of intimacy that anticipates the face-to-face meeting.

OBEY RIGHT AWAY

When the voice is God's , there is usually an obvious outcome or result that we could not make happen, such as emotion, agreement, or willingness to act or stop acting a certain way.

It takes time, practice and trust to decipher the voice of God.

In Greek the word rhema means, "that which is or has been uttered by the living voice."

CASE STUDY FROM THE LIFE OF DAVID

A beautiful picture of intimacy with God is displayed through the life of David.

God has many things to teach us alone. It can be painful and lonely, but it is necessary for growth.

For all of us, there is a time when God takes us to a place of obscurity to show us that God is enough for us.

OBSTACLES: LIES

One of the biggest blocks to intimacy is lies.

Lies are nasty little creatures that suck the life out of a person.

We live by what we believe, so whatever the lie is, we are set up for unhealthiness.

If we believe we are worthless, we will not take the necessary risks to advance in our job, because we don't believe it will do us any good.

If we believe that this is as good as it gets, we won't dream for the future because there is no point.

Truth is the key component to being set free.

Shame often attaches to the lie and leaves us feeling exposed and humiliated.

APPEARANCE VS. REALITY

David Benner, a Christian psychologist, wrote, "Focusing on God while failing to know ourselves deeply may produce an external form of piety, but it will always leave a gap between appearance and reality."

We must be keenly aware of the truth so the lies are blatantly obvious and we immediately reject them when they come.

Perspective is important and a slight adjustment from lies to truth changes everything.

The Greek word for transformed is metamorphao, meaning, "from the inside out."

The lie comes into our mind, but the transformation also occurs in our mind as we choose truth over lies.

FALSE SELF

The false self is the person we create to cover up our feelings of worthlessness, shame, and inadequacy.

Success, people-pleasing, power money and even ministry can be used to cover up the false self.

David Benner wrote, "While other people's excessive attachments and personal falsity often seem glaringly apparent, it is never easy to know the lies of our own life."

THE WAY THROUGH: DISCIPLINE OF HONESTY

Silence causes inward destruction, but confession and forgiveness bring healing and freedom.

Once we speak what is bothering us--confess our sin--and bring it into the light, the reality of the situation returns to its normal size, lies are exposed, and truth enters. The situation may still be dire, but truth accesses light and our ability to handle what is there.

Telling the truth allows us to grow up and mature.

Truth-telling requires discipline because it does not come naturally to us.

Fear of rejection is so strong that many of us would rather go without love than expose our lies.

When we live in honesty, we choose for other to see our warts and all. It is vulnerable, but real.

AUTHENTIC CHURCH?

Some churches choose image over honesty. The way things appear is more important than the way things are.

The church is challenged by authenticity because once someone honestly and vulnerably shares their story, there is an expectation for the next person to tell their story and on and on. Honesty is feared because it blows up the image that everything is OK.

HONESTY IN PRAYER

One of the best places for honesty is in prayer.

Real praying can be a gut-wrenching process whereby the deep longings of our heart are admitted. Oftentimes it looks like a whine session of complaints, of but we are being real about what is going on inside.

God is secure in our relationship to allow us to be honest and make our own choice.

CHAPTER 6: MY IDENTITY IN CHRIST: FOSTERING MY RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

Define yourself radically as one beloved by God. This is the true self. Every other identity is illusion. --Brennan Manning

It is a bold act to pretend to be someone else, but at times all of us present ourselves one way, when inside we are totally different.

Deflection and blame are common responses when we are caught in a lie.

It is easier to let people think well of us than to expose our fraudulence.

JESUS' MISSION

Jesus had a clear sense of mission.

JESUS' BLESSING

Upon coming out of the waters of baptism, God declared for all to hear that Jesus was his beloved son, on whom his favor rests.

When we are unsure of our father's acceptance, affection and approval, we tend to look for it in other places or worse yet,

put on a mask and pretend to be someone we are not to get our emotional needs met.

Removal of the mask and presenting our true selves is the only hope we have of being truly loved.

The scary part of packaging our self is that what started as a role can become an identity.

The great sadness of living a fake like is that no one knows the real you.

Brenner says, "The only hope for unmasking the falsity that resides at the core of our being is a radical encounter with truth."

GET REAL

Living from the true self means no more pretension.

Through love, pretension fades away and who we really are is received and deemed acceptable by us because the person loving us knows the real us.

Self-rejection is a powerful enemy of God's intention.

OBSTACLE: FEAR

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, 10 percent of people in the U.S. , approximately 9.7 million people, experience phobias, many caused by some kind of trauma.

Phobias are the most common mental disorders in the U.S., affecting women more than men and include anxiety disorders, panic disorders, post-traumatic stress disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

DEFINITION OF FEAR

Fear can be defined as an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous and likely to cause pain or injury.

If fear is caused by a belief, then it can be overcome by changing one's thinking.

In a study of thirty thousand adults who reported high stress levels, only those who believed that stress was harmful met an early death. Stress was not the villain--it was the fear that stress was harmful that was the danger.

Adults call fear depression, anxiety, stress, nervousness or tension.

Calling fear stress and blaming the person or situation that triggered the feeling never addresses the fear itself.

Parents' and caregivers' responses to situations let children know if something is safe.

There is little to no sense of adventure with a fearful person because every possible thing that could go wrong is stated as an objection to the venture.

Fear is caused by a belief that starts in the mind.

REINFORCING FEAR

Robert Rosenthal defined the Pygmalion effect as "the phenomenon whereby one person's expectations for another person's behavior come to serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy."

Parents do not realize the extent to which their expectations influence their children's behavior.

FEARS IMPACT UPON SPIRITUALITY

Fear impacts spirituality in three ways.

The first way is that fear demands sight. A hypervigilance is created to foresee potentially dangerous moment and to avoid them at all costs.

The second impact of fear upon spirituality is that fear demands understanding. A hypervigilance of analysis is created to figure things out to remain safe. Risks are small and calculated.

The third impact of fear upon spirituality is that fear demands control. An obsession to control is created, leaving no room for God to be God.

FACE THE FEAR

It is important to identify the cousins of fear, which include the forms of anxiety, worry, intimidation and self-doubt. Each of these forms carries with it the belief that we will not be able to do what is asked of us in the given situation.

Anxiety focuses on future events that may never occur.

Self- doubt lacks confidence in one's own motives.

When any form of fear comes, it is necessary to feel it and not bolt.

FEEL IT

Remain still, take a deep breath, and feel the terror, anxiety, panic, apprehension, foreboding or dread in whatever form it comes.

Purposely begin to take deep cleansing breaths.

Speak out loud the statements in the forms of mantras and affirmations that you have prepared ahead of time.

TALK ABOUT IT

Speaking about the fear that you are facing diminishes its power in your mind.

THE WAY THROUGH: DISCIPLINE OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

The world has an anything goes mentality whereby you can do whatever you want and get your way--greed, lying, stealing, cheating, and deceiving are the norm.

The weapons to counteract this are love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, and self-control.

GIVE UP OR SHUT UP

The enemy's strategy to defeat you is to convince you to give up and shut up;

The author challenges readers not to give up in the battle against "the enemy." Also you must not shut up and be silent in the face of the battle.

BENEFITS OF JOURNALING

Journaling is a good exercise because it allows a person to freely write anything that comes to mind. It helps to articulate emotion that is churning inside of us.

It is an exercise of faith to put in writing what is happening in your life.

The situation becomes real when it is committed to paper.

Journaling brings clarity as you articulate what is going on in your mind.

Writing clears the way for honest evaluation and ownership of your viewpoint.

CHAPTER 7: HEARING GOD'S VOICE: "IS THAT YOU, GOD?"

God speaks in the silence of the heart. Listening is the beginning of prayer."--Mother Teresa

On the spiritual journey, connection with God by speaking and listening is called prayer.

Prayer is as simple as talking with a friend.

A delay in answers to prayer can indicate a character issue and show us what is really in our hearts.

Waiting always exposes our heart. Talking, listening and waiting are all necessary parts of communicating with a God we cannot see.

HOW CAN WE HEAR GOD?

There are several ways to "hear " God's voice. Our senses are all involved in each of these ways , so what we hear, think, feel, see or sense are all included under the umbrella of God's voice.

WORDS OF KNOWLEDGE AND WORDS OF WISDOM

A word of knowledge is a supernaturally given piece of information and knowledge that could not have been known otherwise

A word of wisdom is supernaturally given application to a situation.

The author outlines ways of hearing which include words or phrases that we see in our minds' eye. Also, we may see a picture with deep meaning. A song in another way to "hear" God's voice. In addition, pain in the body can signal a deeper

message . Furthermore, you may blurt something out that leads you in the direction of truth. Finally, a prophetic parallel is a situation in which one thing makes you think of another which moves your spirit into action.

THE WAY THROUGH: DISCIPLINE OF LISTENING PRAYER

Listening to God takes time, attention and energy.

In a vulnerable place a breakthrough of truth is revealed.

BREAKTHROUGH IS ACTIVATED BY OUR OBEDIENCE

It is one thing to hear from God, but then we must come out and act.

Our strategy of listening will be unique to each of us, but we need to listen and obey.

CHARACTER: WHO I AM WHEN NO ONE ELSE SEES ME

Character is who we are when no one else sees us. It is not determined by one decision; it is the summation of many . The culmination of these choices determines if character is good or bad.

Family values shape our thinking and actions for what is right and wrong, good and bad, and acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

INTERNAL MORAL COMPASS

Ongoing choices of engagement in harmful activities can produce life-threatening results that make recovery difficult.

People who choose to live outside the moral and ethical codes of society either live on the margins of society or are imprisoned for their immoral and unethical behavior.

Traits like honesty, integrity and trustworthiness form within an individual as a result of good choices.

Good character comes from an intrinsic motivation to go the right thing simply because it is the right thing.

Guidance and mentorship can provide support to people in the midst of character-forming choices.

REPENTANCE

Repentance differs from confession in that repentance is a decision to turn away and go in the opposite direction , while confession is an admission of wrongdoing.

The kindness of God leads to repentance because we remember that we are loved and that in our confession, God is faithful and just to forgive.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF A BAD CHOICE

Partial truth is still a lie. The choice to lie and stick to the life is wrong.

ADAM I AND ADAM II

Adam I represents drives for external validation through career success and material accomplishment.

Adam II is driven by higher oral virtues , such as the desire to be a good person, to love well, and to sacrifice for the needs of others.

OBSTACLE: TEMPTATION

One of the biggest obstacles to character formation is temptation to do our own thing. We want to be our own god.

PERSEVERANCE

A good God who loves us brings good things into our lives and works all things together for our good.

THE WAY THROUGH: DISCIPLINE OF SUBMISSION

As Westerners, submission may be one of the most difficult spiritual disciplines of engagement due to its requirement of all that we are.

Submission is a wholehearted agreement to voluntarily come under the authority of another person in unreserved obedience.

The biblical meaning of submission is an attitude to come under someone to lift them up with honor.

Love provides the intrinsic motivation to willingly relinquish our rights. Only love can cause people to give their lives.

HOLY COURTESY

Leanne Payne wrote that "obedience is the 'holy courtesy' required for entering into the divine relationship."

Soren Kierkegaard wrote, "It is not a person's words, but an individual's life, that is the best picture of faith."

