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Spring 2022

Final Assignment Autobiography

Socially

Socially, I have grown so much due to being a part of groups in this course. Small groups have been an excellent way for me to process the material covered in the lesson and gain further understanding. My leadership skills has also improved from small groups by encouraging others with positivity and impactful advice. The social setting of our small groups has also helped me with spiritual questions as well as, providing support on other life issues. In my small group we prayed for each other regarding family, ministry, career, school, finances, relationships, and other life decisions.

The small group from this course has been a great way for me to expand my decision making and analytical abilities and critically evaluating skills by discussing challenging concepts. From our discussions I have also gained better insight in understanding the ministry God would have me serve in.

I have also joined a small group with members from my online church, Transformation Church. The experience has been amazing for me to seek out the knowledge and wisdom from each other. My church small group is called the Humbled Vessels. I know that God has joined this group together because we feel

like family. We have drawn close in a short amount of time. I believe God has ordained the members to be together because we all needed each other especially after being isolated due to the pandemic. I now have a spiritual family that I text, call and communicate with almost every day. We have even started weekly Zoom workout sessions so we can be better steward of our bodies together.

One of my specific social goals is to start a neighborhood block association to reinforce community amongst my neighbors. I live in the Northern Bronx, New York. In my neighborhood it is common not to know the person living next door. I believe a block association will bring about healthy collaboration and safe community. I understand from being a part of small groups that solutions are better implemented when a group of people unite with the same agenda.

I Estimate our block association to have our first meeting by September 2022. I have already visited my community board office and received and necessary forms. During this past Christmas holiday I held a turkey giveaway and gained the opportunity to connect with my neighbors. Connecting with my neighbors during that opportunity has led me to the vision for this block association to work with the local police department, faith organizations, non-profits, community board and elected officials.

This goal is action-oriented because it brings forth my natural spiritual instinct of activism. I love serving God through public engagement and outreach. Thus, achievements in implementing a impactful block association will bring about positive change in my community and glory to God.

Realistically, I need to improve my organizational and administrative skills to accomplish this goal. I also need to find people willing to be board members to serve on the block association. This initiative also is time consuming, therefore I will need to improve my time management skills; while still being considerate of others availability. To accomplish my plans, I will need to implement a detailed day to day schedule, delegate task, ask for help, and set priorities.

Physically

1st Corinthians 6:19-20 says, my physical body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and I am not my own; I was bought at a price. Therefore, I must honor God with my body. Thus, I must be a good and faithful steward over my physical health and wellness. Some steps that I am taking to ensure good physical health are eating healthy, exercising, getting enough sleep, taking vitamins/natural supplements, and

keeping up with my annual doctor's appointment. Maintaining a healthy weight and keeping a balanced diet is important to me when in ministry for many reasons.

The most basic reason for me to maintain good physical health is for me to be able to complete my ministry assignments. I am not sure of the exact area of ministry God is calling me to enter however; I am sure that I will need to be in good physical health to answer God's call. When I was ushering and serving on the cleaning ministry in my church, I had to physically be able to stand up, lift heavy items, and perform other physical tasks.

I need to be a good steward over my physical body to look good. When I look and feel healthier, I walk and present myself with more confidence. Now, I am not glorifying being vain and superficial. However, when I have to minister in front of an audience I am less distracted worrying about how I look in an outfit. Such as, is this too tight, or does my face look fat on camera. Some would say it is wrong for me to think this way about weight and appearance when in ministry. Yet, I bring my entire being, mind, body and soul before God and ask that He use it; why not give God my best most beautiful, healthy self?

One of my SMART goals is to physically move towards the promises of God. I believe that will sometimes require me to physically move to different locations and regions. Specifically, I will be traveling to Southlake, Texas on April

28, 2022 and to Kenya, Africa in October of this year for ten days. I have never traveled further than New Jersey however, God is calling to expand my worldview by physically moving to gain insight, understanding, and healing from other states and global regions.

I am traveling to Southlake, Texas to take my 14-year-old son to a men's Christian summit at Gateway Church. This trip is orchestrated by the Lord and I am physically moving in obedience, believing that my son's life will be impacted in supernatural ways by this summit. Even if it's just a seed that is planted or a seed watered; I know that God will give the increase in my son's life.

My trip to Kenya, Africa is to visit Mully Children Family (MCF). MCF is a Christ centered organization that has transformed the lives of thousands of homeless street kids into productive, successful Christ filled individuals. God has called me to do the same here in the United States for foster kids, troubled youth and orphans. I will be going to Kenya to gain insight and partner with this organization. MCF has built a self-sustaining farm, freshwater, school and housing facility for former homeless children. Before I found out about MCF I received a vision from God to provide foster kids and teens living in group homes a Christ center holistic approach to being successful.

I measure this goal in a number of stages. Such as, completing the non-profit business plan and applying for the NYS non-profit license, lawyers, and financial documentation is one stage which can take a year or two. The next measurable stage is finding people to join and partner with me in achieving this mission which can take another six months to one year. The other various stages are partnering with government agencies, applying for government contracts, developing diversified funding sources and acquiring land and space for operation. Nevertheless, I know this vision is from God and if God trusted me enough to give it to me, I will do everything within my physical abilities to bring it forth.

My vision of starting a Christ centered children transformation non-profit organization is action-oriented, which will certainly require me to have good physical health. There will be some long nights and little sleep. However, my discipline and healthy lifestyle practices now will allow me to still prioritize and maintain a healthy lifestyle later when my schedule becomes hectic.

Realistically, I do believe my willingness to answer God's calling to go and physically move, or travel to His assignments will require a high level of physical endurance, energy, and stamina. I also want to show other Christian women how to be good, faithful stewards over their physical body and health while being in ministry, having a secular career, as well as a busy home life. The lesson on time management is the key to accomplishing my ministerial assignments.

Cognitively

Cognitively this course has forced me to develop a better approach to critical thinking and reasoning from a biblical perspective. It was difficult to reason from a non-secular worldview when analyzing some of the readings even though the readings were faith-based. It was challenging for me to move past the basic, surface or superficial understanding of the text.

In the beginning of the course, it was very difficult for me to complete the readings without falling asleep, due to my sleeping disorder. However, I do believe the battle was also spiritual also because I did not feel sleepy until I opened my book and tried to read or study. This pattern of falling asleep uncontrollably when trying to do my work went on for weeks. It was so overwhelming and devastating I wanted to drop out of school.

From the beginning of the semester until now I have had to continuously ask God for wisdom and focus. Reading, understanding, reasoning, and writing practical application from a ministerial view point has been very difficult. For example, this assignment is super frustrating. I have never analyzed my ministerial goals from every area of my life for the next three years. While writing this paper I've had to process and challenge a number of areas that I don't want to dig into.

These areas are vulnerable and have never been explored or developed previously, so they are weak.

My critical thinking from a spiritual perspective with the ability to translate practical applications in my writing is a skill that this course has challenged. My cognitive development of spiritual operation is in a development stage from this course. I previously believed that this development would just happen miraculously however, I now see that it has to be taught and practiced.

Within the next three years my goals are to complete graduate school at Nyack seminary college and to enter into ministry working in a Christ centered non-profit organization. My cognitive SMART goals on achieving academic success and in seminary is to continue challenging and strengthen my intellectual skills. Specifically, I need to strengthen my writing skills by receiving help from the writing center consistently. I want to measure improvements in my writing skills each semester by analyzing my growth progression in my writing.

This process is action-oriented because it requires the ability to apply advanced reasoning and spiritual critical thinking. The discipline of advanced reasoning and spiritual critical thinking will not only apply to my academic career but also to my goal of starting a Christ centered non-profit. Realistically, I must also improve my administrative skills and written communication skills to achieve this goal.

Considering the lesson on dealing with shame and performance and analyzing the question who am I? Really? I realize my identity and performance have been from the mindset of not being smart because I have dyslexia. Shame and condemnation led me to years of low academic achievement. Cognitively before this course I mastered operating at a just enough performance. Uncomfortably and challenging environment caused me to give up, this is how I felt at the beginning of this course. I was very close to dropping this class due to my uncomfortably and false identity of inadequacy.

By the grace of God, I have reached the end of this class but the beginning of my journey of overcoming shame and performance by recognizing my false identity as the problem in every area of my life, repenting, renouncing, asking God to reveal who I really am, and accepting God's acceptance of me.

Spiritually

In my grief journal I talked a little about my two most prevalent sorrows and grief in my life which are being dyslexic and having a sleeping disorder. Some of the physical and socioeconomic side effects of these limitation were living a life of coping, struggling, and surviving instead of thriving. The spiritual effect was assuming a false identity.

Until recently my identity and mind set were centered in not being smart enough because of dyslexia and worthless because I believed people seen me as lazy for falling asleep so easy, due to my sleeping disorder. However, during the duration of this semester there has been a tug from God causing a shift in my spirit and being. This change is difficult and uncomfortable. I feel a inner fight, a struggle a feeling of vulnerability. This shift from God is a battle because I believe letting go of the false identity is comfortable and has been my coping mechanism for a long time.

At the end of my grief journal I stated, "There is also a fear of the unknown, even though I believe the new person is better than the former. It is still a battle to turn from my former habits, behaviors, prospective, and attention. I know I need help in the season but I want to be made whole." I ended my grief journal by asking for help in the transformation of my false identity into God's true identity of me.

Since writing my grief journal the Holy Spirit has been changing my body, soul, and spirit by renewing my thoughts, emotions, will, and physical desires. I am seeing the word of God be manifested in my life. When in Ezekiel 36:24-27 talks about how God will bring His people home, clean them, give a new heart, and put His spirit in them so that they will follow and obey Him. I am a living

testimony that is scripture is true. I have been regenerated, empowered, and am being continually being sanctified.

I no longer believe the lies that I am not smart enough or that I am lazy. I believe my infirmities are liken to 2nd Corinthians 12: 7-9, when Paul prayed for God to remove his thorn in his flesh. The Lord's reply to Paul's request was, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." (NLT) This scripture holds true in my life because when I am weak, lacking wisdom or have limitation the grace, wisdom, and strength of the Holy Spirit within me is manifested.

I am also growing spiritually by learning to follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit. The lesson on the role of the Holy Spirit has helped to understand and recognize its regeneration activity. I am more sensitive to the Holy Spirit is drawing to witness and pray for someone. For example, I was on the train and a young man was witnessing on Easter Sunday and while he was ministering the Spirit was drawing me to pray for a man sitting across from me, so I did. In that situation I recognized the Holy Spirit speaking and was obedient to His command. Thus, He was showing me who's heart was ready to receive Him.

By the grace of God, I am developing the ability to enjoy the mystery and beauty of nature and God's existence. Spiritually I am gaining a deeper understanding of good and evil, forgiveness and mercy, compassion and love. Additionally, because

I have been given grace and a new heart, I am no longer fast to judge people harshly or quick to seek punishment or retaliation on them for their transgressions. I am truly amazed with how the Lord has brought me to this stage of loving others as I love myself, losing attachment to my ego, and forgiving my enemies.

As I process my spiritual SMART goals, I am reminded of the Garden Concept of Spiritual Formation. Understanding and applying this concept is helping me to continuously water (nurture) and weed (removing hindrances) in my spiritual growth journey.

Specifically, I must renew my mind by reading, studying, memorizing, praying, and applying the word of God to my identity. My watering is continuously believing and living by the identity God has given me, such as. "I am blessed, I am the head and not the tail, I am the righteousness of God, I can do all things through Christ Jesus, who strengthens me."

My measurable goals in this area are for me to be overflowing and exemplifying the fruits of the Holy Spirit; which are kindness, joy, love, peace, generosity, self-control, long-suffering, gentleness, generosity, patience, and faithfulness. As I previously explained, it is amazing how God has given me a love for showing people grace, forgiveness, and mercy. My action-oriented goals are reinforcing productive spiritual habits such as, praying, meditation on the word of

God, stillness with God, generosity, and fasting. As well as, removing or limiting my spiritual hindrance such as, disobedience, procrastination, and distractions.

Emotionally

My emotions are some what complicated to define. I am an nature introverted person so I tend to withdraw into isolation when I feel overwhelmed. I tend to deal with situations by sleeping, crying a lot, anger, numbness. When looking up the definition to numb, it says, deprived of feeling or responsiveness; deprived of the power of sensation. My emotional response to my life perception and experiences in the past have been numbness. My taking on of a false perception of my identity has caused different emotions, resulting in negative behavior responses or impulsive reactions. I believe in my mind when I think of something being uncomfortable or challenging my emotional reaction is fear. Resulting in the physical behavior of protection, not wanting to feel pain or hurt.

Therefore, my response to challenging situation, or experiences has been controlled by my emotions. I recognize that feelings are a real physical sensation that results in an emotion however, I will no longer be stopped from moving forward instead I will use my fears as motivation to help me grow.