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SF505

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Reading Report 2: Spiritual Journey

*Spiritual Journey*

A decade ago I would've said that a spiritual journey had nothing to do with a person's Christian walk. In 2013 I was a student at a liberal theological seminary. I believed that spiritual formation was about being grounded in one's walk with God and in harmony with my community, especially the ecumenical and multi-faith society. In 2023 I believe that spiritual formation is entirely concerned with a personal walk with God personally and professionally. I know this especially from a semester at Alliance Theological Seminary. During my semester I learned from Dr. Wanda Walborn as she taught us about what it meant to be still, to be silent, to wait, to grieve, and to allow the Lord to form and fashion us in whatsoever, the Lord wishes.

To add emphasis to this declaration I read Dr. Walborn's work, *Spiritual Journey: Can I Really Get Close To God?* "We were made from love, formed in love, and require love for healthy growth and development."<sup>1</sup> Spiritual Formation is first and foremost about understanding and receiving that God loves us and we are formed in that identity. "As children of God, we can approach God's throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Heb. 4:16). God is present. He promises to answer before we call and hear us while we are still speaking (Is. 65:24). His eyes are ever on us and He is attentive to our cry (Ps. 34:15). It will take persistence on our part to keep coming to God despite the lingering fear that He may not respond. We must push past this nagging fear and come anyway.

<sup>1</sup> Walborn, Wanda. *Spiritual Journey: Can I Really Get Close to God?* (p. 20). Carpenter's Son Publishing. Kindle Edition.

He is faithful and He will come to us.”<sup>2</sup> Like a loving Father, God hears our cries, God is present in our problems and we can be assured of His attention to detail in providing a way when we feel we can escape. He’s a present hope in times of trouble.

The Spiritual journey is one of intentionality. Dr. Walborn encourages us, “The journey of spiritual formation is an intentional choice to draw near to God and become like Jesus.”<sup>3</sup>We have an intentional responsibility to go after the presence of God. We have a role to take the Father’s hand and allow Him to lead us into the ways of the Son Jesus through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit according to God’s grace. “Our reflection of God (imago Dei), our formation through the church (ecclesiology), and our participation in the mission of God (missio Dei) give us purpose on the spiritual journey.”<sup>4</sup>

As we all pursue a greater understanding of our formation in Christ. We must have accountability. The way we have accountability or people to help us in our walk with God is by creating a safe space or safe place for this community to grow. I learned that I should have a few men in my life so that I can really get ugly and share the naked truth. These safe places are not judgment-free zones like Planet Fitness but places to be open to challenge and courage.

As I close this has been such a helpful read to my personal spiritual formation. It was from this class and book that I decided to change my major and pursue building dynamics that encourage strong spiritual formation identities for my church. Not just as a ministry but for personal and professional development.

<sup>2</sup> Walborn, Wanda. *Spiritual Journey: Can I Really Get Close to God?* (p. 21). Carpenter's Son Publishing. Kindle Edition.

<sup>3</sup> Walborn, Wanda. *Spiritual Journey: Can I Really Get Close to God?* (p. 34). Carpenter's Son Publishing. Kindle Edition.

<sup>4</sup> Walborn, Wanda. *Spiritual Journey: Can I Really Get Close to God?* (p. 37). Carpenter's Son Publishing. Kindle Edition.

