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PMN 101.NA/NOS Introduction to Spiritual Formation

### God's voice

Forming part of this class has taught me how prioritical listening to God's voice is. During my quiet times with God I have observed my thoughts in silence, and I have seen where my heart lies. Most of the time in the silence my voice is the one who I hear loudest. Through attentive listening and quieting of my own thoughts, I have learnt the importance of listening, not just to anything but to the voice of God. The first week of the course, "Spiritual Formation" I remember sitting and listening to Professor Wanda speak. She emphasized how the class and I will be learning how to hear God's voice and the spiritual importance this class has. In elementary when my family stopped going to church, I started seeking God through prayer. Throughout those years of elementary school, I whispered to God and laughed with Him, I cried to Him and He showed up. I remember 5th grade Ernest full with joy after I had asked God to allow me to be student of the month. It may seem like a simple prayer, but this prayer meant a lot to 10 year old me. In my years of elementary school I had never been recognized academically. So before I graduated elementary school I asked God to allow me to be student of the month, and the next day I held a diploma close to my chest, that had my name on print stating, "student of the month"

College has been a very different story from highschool, I am trying to get A+'s on my classes, and homework almost always piles up. Spiritual formation has definitely reminded me to have quiet time with God. It's actually crazy how many times I have completed journals the day before my Spiritual formation class meeting. It showed me how much I talk to God and how little time I give Him to speak. In my first Journal, I started with hearing a tune playing. It was a song I had listened to before. It says , "toma completo lo que yo soy, no me quiero alejar, acércame señor quiero sentirte quiero sentirte, más y más " a Spanish song, it translates to, "take full what I am, I don't want to walk away, bring me closer Lord I want to feel you I want to feel you, more and more" I did not realize the tune was playing until I focused my attention and realized it was there. After a while of silence, I saw an image of a female friend giving me the biggest smile while looking at me, and afterwards I saw another picture of a male friend smiling but not looking at me. I felt nervous at first, my body was tense, but as I sat more time waiting to

listen, my body felt less tense, and more warm. My hands felt warm. I did not quite understand the pictures but seeing them smiling made me feel good for them.

For my second Journal it was a bit hard to focus during the quiet time, it was probably because I wanted to guess what God was saying. While trying to get rid of these thoughts that clouded my mind with “what is God trying to say?” “Is he saying this? Or this?” I was brought back to a homeless guy I had conversed with, I saw the image of his body and his condition. The man's odor was really strong, and it reminded me of how we used to stink to God when we were spiritually dead, like Lazarus. Lazarus was the brother of Mary, when Lazarus died he was wrapped in a cave, dead for three days. Jesus in John 11:39 said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead for four days.” and through this biblical story I was reminded that Jesus still has the power to resurrect an unbeliever, nobody is too far gone, and we all need Jesus. And I will always need Jesus, always. So if I were to summarize God's word for me that day it was to humble myself because I do not know how powerful He Himself can be, His thoughts are above ours.

In Journal three, I felt peaceful at first. I tried my best to focus on God's voice, I saw an overlapping vision of worries about people in my life, like friends, and classmates. I tried to concentrate harder and realized that when my own thoughts would pop up, they were usually feeding my anxiety and realized they might be able to accumulate to create something bigger in the future. So in that moment I repented and gave my thoughts over to God, because in that moment my focus was not on heavenly things but on things of this world. So what I got from this quiet time was to cast my anxiety and cares to Him because He cares. He cares more about me than I care about myself, and that is the truth. After the quiet time I realized how there are so many thoughts occurring throughout the day that we do not realize all of them. So many thoughts occur throughout the day that I forget to be vigilant of them. This quiet time made me want to be more careful with thoughts that may seem innocent at first.

Journal four consisted of me seeing my mom looking at herself on her phone. She looked like she was searching for things to fix or clean up on her face. The background was her room but around the room the background was white. My mom was fixing up her skin. She pulled it and looked closely at herself. I was looking at her through a third person point of view and felt rushed by her but internally I felt chill. While I was staring at her, I questioned why she worried so much about how she looked, she already looked so beautiful to me in that vision of her looking at herself. I then sensed she was in a hurry. After reflecting upon the vision, I concluded that this vision was a demonstration of what I was doing. I am too busy worrying about myself, when I am already loved. The third person view was in a rush meaning that there

are more important things to think about. Due to this vision I felt like checking up on my mom, seeing how her self esteem is, because I literally think she is so precious so I would not want her putting herself down.

For Journal five, my legs were a bit tense because of school work stress but when sitting in silence I felt peace. My muscles slowly relaxed. I was able to identify thoughts that were not from God, and just relax in the truths of God. I love how God makes us wait. In the moment of waiting it can feel very strainful almost like suspense but the thought of God making us wait to just spend time with Him is beautiful. It made me realize how much more time I can spend in silence with God, not expecting Him to say anything but just waiting on Him. Waiting is beautiful and also a terrible thing, it can be very painful but it all depends on how we approach it. That word really ministered to me all these thoughts. God is good even through the wait. Also, I definitely need to read the Bible more, it's something I need to do daily, I recognize it, and I should have no excuse to not do it.

Sitting in silence has definitely been beneficial, each moment felt like a step back from human life. I enjoyed all of the moments I had with God in these quiet times. I really appreciate this practice and will continue to use it. Do not conform to this world, is a phrase I will keep close to me, and what a blessing it is to have a God who desires a relationship with us, now it's up to us to desire a relationship with Him.