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Introduction to Spiritual Formation
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Guyon Response Paper

Jeanne Guyon's book, *Experiencing God Through Prayer*, discusses the value of developing a connection with God through prayer. She understands that experiencing God's kindness in prayer is different from regularly approaching God in prayer. She demonstrates various ways for Christians to take pleasure in his presence, learn more about his word, unwind from anxiety, and strengthen their relationship with him in this book. Additionally, she stresses the value of listening because we frequently neglect to do so because we are so busy living our daily lives that it appears that we have no time to rest our thoughts and open our ears to hear what God is saying. In this response paper I will be sharing a story that impacted my life greatly last summer, what I realized by reading the Guyon book, *How God spoke to me*.

Last summer in July 2022, I went to a christian camp so I could become a better leader for my church since I am Seventh Day Adventist and it is required that you do so. It was my first time going away to camp without my big sister who is my protector. I was excited to go because I would be around girls my age who are christian and I felt like it would be a great experience for me. I went to the camp with my boyfriend. The girls in the camp liked him and they told him “ They would make me sleep outside” because we are dating. All throughout the camp, the girls treated me horribly. What made this experience worse for me is that most of the churches there were in cliques. If one person felt a way, everybody else sided with them. Everyone felt a way about me during the camp because of one person. One of the girls stated that “ she was going to break my teeth” “ she wanted to curse me out, but if she did she would get in trouble.” This experience traumatized me for the rest of the year and it still does. I carry so much anger from

that experience because I had such an expectation from them because they were christians. I felt vulnerable and weak during camp, I felt triggered and I hated the fact that at least a big group of 15 girls were after me and were gossiping about me. I totally disconnected from the program after that and lost my reasoning and I am still carrying so much anger and hurt till this day because of the situation.

By reading the Gunyon book I realized how important it is to open my ears and listen And experience God's goodness, the statement that made me realize this is " When God comes to live within us, he brings with him all his virtues and goodness" (Guyon, 55) in addition, it made me think of the song Jireh, " If he dresses the lilies with beauty and splendor how much more will he love you" (Jireh, 6:11-6:18) this made me realize that when you draw near to God, he will come to you. And that is the power of praying to him on a daily basis. By praying I am giving him an open invitation to come into my life and help me navigate all of my pain and hurt and anger that I am currently facing.

The world is filled with distractions. As a christian college student, it is hard to pray because of the workload and phones. It is hard to unplug, but this book reminds me that I need to meditate on one thing at a time. It states that " Speed reading can be used for other subjects but never for the word of divine truth" (Guyon, 26) . I tend to procrastinate and work under pressure just like many other students. But these statements remind me that with the word of God, it is important to take my time and digest what the word is saying instead of reading just to read. " It is not the quantity of scripture that you read but the quality that will be to your benefit." (Guyon, 25) by slowing down and meditating on the word and getting familiar, it allows me to cut out distractions that make me lose focus and it helps me to experience God's goodness.

I heard God speak to me by reading the book, he gave me songs in my head to calm my anxiousness and anger. He is reminding me of letting go of the anger that I have built up. One time he told me to 'relax' and another time he told me that I need to let go of all this anger because it is causing me to lose who I really am. And I have noticed that I am not the friendliest person everyday, I get irritated so quickly, if someone cracks their knuckles around me it sets me off, if someone speaks about the girls at camp I feel depressed. And he also comforted me through my sadness. There are many nights I cried telling God I am just not doing well but the book stated " God's presence is not a stronghold to be taken by force or violence. His kingdom of peace, which can only be gained through love" (Guyon, 71) and it reminded that God brings peace and it is telling me that with love I can gain his kingdom and that is a reminder for me to aim for love instead of remaining bitter and angry.

In conclusion,It is important to know about the power of prayer and remaining silent and letting God speak. As humans, we have a lot of distractions such as our work, school, phones, family and friends. We now have so many things to juggle all at once. But this book reminds us that it is important to take it one day at a time. To meditate on the word, to not rush when doing it but to give God our attention. And it also makes you take a step back and let God speak to you. It shows that in quietness, he may choose to speak to us because as human beings we talk a lot but we often lack the self control to use our ears. By listening to him, we also get to feel our own emotions, we may always be distracted because we are avoiding our own problems but by being attentive to God and giving him an hour of our day he can work in our lives. I would recommend this book to every christian to read because its content is so powerful and it positively impacted my life.