

John Moran Spiritual Growth Plan Creative Element

When I think about my 3 ½ year spiritual growth plan, it starts with me reflecting on where I am now in my walk with the Lord. One of the early chapters in *Experiencing God Through Prayer* books speaks about meditating the words. Meditating on God's prayer is desirable but known by very few. (p. 19, Guyon) My journey has already begun with how I read, study, and prayer. Once so interesting to me is how I thought I had the read-and-pray model down pat. I created a daily routine where I would start my day off by reading a chapter a day from the Bible and then praying for roughly 15-30 minutes. However, although this routine was meaningful and created an excellent start to my day, it was done as more of a checklist to ensure I was successfully getting through the day. When I think about scriptural mediation, it seems to make so much sense to read only a small portion of scripture at a time and allow the words to sit for a period before moving on. I also appreciate that this process addresses the area I often struggle with retaining scripture verses. Because I approached the bible trying to get through it, I often forgot what I read.

From an emotional standpoint, I want to focus on the obstacles that are routine headwinds I allow to get in the way of my walk and devotion to the Lord; we all have many roadblocks, and I am no exception. Growing up as a nonpracticing Catholic, I was not taught the importance of developing an intimate relationship with God. This has caused a deep-rooted inability to connect emotionally with the Lord at times, both inwardly and outwardly. Since I became a Christian, I sometimes struggle to display that emotional connection, although I know that I love and adore the Lord in the deepest parts. What is interesting, however, is that as a worship leader, I have experienced several beautifully emotional moments when I can sense the Lord's presence, like a warmth filling me during a song that can cause me to start to feel emotional. This is an area where I will continue to explore and unravel to rebuild a relationship where I am not hesitant to shout at the top of my lungs, I love you, Lord, when appropriate.

Having three younger kids, a full-time job, being a worship leader, and being heavily involved in our church, life can become noisy and quickly. In the Spiritual Journey reading material, I appreciated the idea of being on a journey despite the many roadblocks we all face. When I think about how to continue to evolve spiritually, I want to learn to stay focused on the spiritual journey while learning how to turn down the noise. The journey is available for anyone to join, but not for the faint of heart (pg. 40, Walborn). That writing is something I wrestle with, and as part of my 3 ½ year journey, I will continue to work at coming to terms with this. I have and will continue to work at deepening my intimacy with the Lord by intentionally seeking him. Not quitting when life gets hard and obstacles are thrown in the way, part of the journey inevitably is learning how to navigate through the murky waters when the storms come while keeping a direct line of sight on the Lord and continuing to push forward. I intend to do just that. Work towards developing a deeper intimacy with God by addressing the hidden obstacles head-on in my life, which may sometimes get in the way of my journey. Learning how to take off the mask is just being my most authentic self in large part of this.

I have a deep desire to become more knowledgeable about the bible. As part of my 3 ½ year journey, I plan to spend time reading, meditating, studying, and providing instructions to improve my scripture heart, mind, and intellect. I often pray to the Lord for greater wisdom because I struggle to retain scripture verses; I just read or recall passages needed for a particular discussion. After this class, I realize that changing my approach, reading brief passages, meditating, and praying on them will very likely serve me far better in my continuing intellectual growth over the next 2 ½ years.

It has been in my heart for quite some time to begin to affect social change from a spiritual standpoint. God calls us to help the poor and speak up for those in need, the fatherless children, and the destitute.

It has taken me a long time to realize that God allows some of us provisions, not necessarily for us to enjoy,

but also to pour out onto others. I have been praying for a new field of work to open for me to further the Lord's kingdom meaningfully. I plan to work for the next 3 ½ years on praying, listening, and acting for and when new doors open; for opportunities for my family and me to serve more intentionally and advance the Kingdom of Christ. To focus on helping the downtrodden and those in need. I desire for this to become a fabric of our everyday life.