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Introduction to Spiritual Formation

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Spiritual Growth Plan

This class made me realize how disconnected I was in Spirit with the Lord. I have been keeping the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual parts of my life dedicated to God but there is one aspect I have ignored. Socially, I make sure I am the friend and family that Christ would want me to be. Emotionally, I make sure I take care of my negativity and enjoy my positivity so that I can be someone who is emotionally available to others. In terms of physical, I take care of my body everyday because it is the temple that God has given me for my time on Earth. Intellectually, I dedicated my years in my first college gaining a Theology degree to learn more about God and His significance on the human species and history. However, despite my success in those areas, I always found myself stuck with a feeling of a void in my soul. Spirituality is something that I never properly recognized as part of my soul.

With this realization, I know where to start, thanks to the books assigned in this course along with the videos that helped me grasp some spiritual concepts. The assignment, Guyon Reading Paper, helped me understand the fundamental action for connecting spiritually: stillness. Stillness was definitely something I did not explore in my younger days. I think that this practice benefited me a lot this semester and helped me understand the spiritual concepts mentioned in, *Introduction to Spiritual Formation* because it introduces the concept of Spiritual Disciplines of Abstinence (Withholding) on page 57. Stillness, solitude, and silence allows the environment for spiritual engagement with the Bible, not just empirical engagement. This time of withholding,

allows me to remove distractions and focus on the spiritual messages of the Bible. The end of this course does not have to be the end of this spiritual practice. As a matter of fact, it is just the beginning. This is what I will be incorporating into my daily life, to grow spiritually. I am definitely not spiritually mature or confident, but I know this behavior/habit will make a great foundation for my spiritual growth over the next few years because it is so simple, and easy! I can add this to my morning routine everyday before making my lovely cup of coffee and the beauty of it is that I know God will work with the small actions of faith. This small routine, I know and believe, will add up even though it may seem like nothing at the moment. Just 10 minutes of my morning. 10 minutes everyday for the whole year for the next few years.

Now that the goal and plan of action is set, I need to have a method to stay consistent. And that method for consistency is my pastor and my close childhood church friends of over 15 years. These are people that I have a relationship with through God, it is what our relationship is founded on. Faith is really important to us, and they know and care about my spiritual weakness and told me they want to see me spiritually strong. Having those people as my accountability sources will put positive pressure and reminders that I am a spiritual person as well, as unspiritual I may be at the moment. I am someone who wants to be their best selves, even though I fail myself a lot. I have no problem growing emotionally, intellectually, and socially through God because the empirical knowledge that the Bible provides is what I notice first and the principles that I improve myself upon. It is my reason for living but I am clearly missing something. Before this class, I never saw myself as spiritual, thus ran away from it and tried to compensate for it in other areas of life like intellect, emotions, physicality, and sociability. I think I compensated successfully, but I cannot deny how important it is to be spiritually aware and

how desperately I need to grow in that area. But now, I am no longer afraid and I am ready to swim in this world of spirituality towards God.