Personal Assessment and Goal Setting Final Paper

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Social:

Until recently, I would have said I lived a very healthy social life. I work at our church with my very best friends and we are super involved with everything happening here. But, as I think a little more reflectively, our busyness with church activities paired with our growing family has made it so that we are often around a lot of people but don't necessarily have the time, energy, or space to go deep in those relationships. So often when I'm at church or our small group I have our two toddlers hanging on my leg with lots of needs or I'm in charge of a church gathering and running around orchestrating everything that is going on. Rarely am I not overwhelmed with some responsibility and able to sit down with one or two people in front of me and really share my heart or hear theirs. I think this has caused my friendships (although there are many) to become shallow and less life-giving. It has also allowed conflict to build up and go unresolved.

When we watched the Rick Warren lesson on conflict resolution, I felt convicted that there were a few close friendships where seemingly small conflicts had arisen and festered because we hadn't had the time to tend to them. It was really eye-opening to see the results of these small conflicts as they built up and began affecting my relationship with God, other people, my prayer life and, of course, that specific relationship.

I also have been learning through my time with my counselor that, because of my family or origin and up brining, I am a person with avoidant attachment. I'm still at the early stages of understanding what this looks like in my life and means for my relationships but I'm beginning to see how it has hindered my friendships and even my marriage over the years. It is

uncomfortable and unnatural for me to rely on people for anything including normal things like emotional connection. Even though I desire close relationships and deep friendship, I haven't learned the normal tools most people have to develop them. When I look at the last few generations of my family, I see a trend where my grandparents and my parents slowly lost most of their friendships and close relationships as they aged. They also didn't know how to develop deep, reciprocal, and reliable friendships therefore they were never able to teach me the basic mechanisms of relationships. Although not the most encouraging or exciting revelation, I'm thankful for God opening my eyes to this so I can grow and improve my relationships!

My relational goal for the next year is to set a weekly time with my best friend (likely to grab coffee for an hour on Monday mornings at 6am before our kids wake up or our husbands go to work) to get together, even for a short amount of time, without our kids to check in on one another and dive deeper into our heart and how we are doing. I have already chatted with my friend about this and she was so excited because she was able to share that she was feeling similarly about not having healthy relationships right now and wanted to invest in our friendship during this crazy time of having little kids as well! We will hold each other accountable to this goal.

Physical:

This is difficult area of my life for me to evaluate! I have a three-year-old, two-year-old, and am currently pregnant with our third so my ability to actually invest the amount of time and energy I would like to into fitness and healthy eating is not realistic as this stage of life. That said, I know it's important and I don't want to totally give up on my physical health. Luckily, chasing after two little kids keeps me decently active and in shape, but in the last year I have

experienced some extreme back issues from my many years of consecutive pregnancy and breast-feeding. This back pain has caused me to miss out on so many things and to live in regular fear and stress of my back going out on me. It has kept me from being able to lift my kids, play on adult sports league, and so much more. I know for my all-around health this is an issue I need to address and prioritize time into so that I can be the mom, wife, and friend I want to be in the years going forward!

My physical goal is to complete "Nourish Move Love" pregnancy strength training exercise videos three times a week for the next seven months (when our third baby is due). I am home with my kids most Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays so I plan to do these 30 min exercise videos over the kid's afternoon nap. I have done these videos in the past for my back issues and they were hugely impactful for my overall health. My husband also has similar physical health needs and goals so we will keep each other accountable to push hard so that we can feel strong and good about our physical health when our next baby arrives!

Cognitive:

Currently being in grad school has really allowed me to focus my time and energy into my cognitive health this last year. It has been so great to have time set aside to study and learn new things—something I really enjoy but haven't done much of since being in college! I enjoy the world of academia, sitting in lectures, reading recommended books, and having my thoughts and beliefs challenged. I have been so blessed by my husband, church, and community to help me make space to invest in this area of growth! I think the biggest arena for me to grow in cognitively right now is to actually take some time where I'm not inputting new information into my brain and to spend some of that quiet time processing the things I've learned that week. As

much as I love learning new things, taking time to allow it all to sink in and chew on it is just as valuable. I think that the difficulty lies in time management and the chart that we talked about in class with the 'urgent/important," "urgent/unimportant," "non-urgent/important," and "non-urgent/unimportant" sections. While I'm in school, listening to lectures and reading go to the top of the "urgent/important" category because they are assignments with due dates and grades. But spending time actually letting all of that material soak in would fall under the "non-urgent/important" category because no one is grading me on processing all that I've learned (except for his assignment, so thank you!). I know it's very needed to spend time reflecting and processing but it is so hard when there are so many other urgent needs to jump to the top of the priority list.

I'm not completely sure of how things need to change in terms of my time management but that is because I don't have a good handle of how my time is currently being spent. *For that reason, my cognitive goal is start each week during the next semester by drawing the "urgent/important" chart and filling in all the things that are competing for my time that week. I will put "1+ hour of processing and reflecting on what I've learned this week" in the "urgent/important category" and use the chart to more appropriately prioritize my daily goals for the following seven days.* I think this would be a good activity to do with my husband because many of our responsibilities overlap or are shared, plus then we can help keep each other accountable to do it every week. *Sunday evening after our kids are in bed but before we jump into the next busy work week seems like the best time for us to do this.*

Emotional:

I have grown so much in my emotional health through my time with my counselor. There have been so many aspects of my emotional life that I was unaware of and thought was normal. As I've processed through much of my childhood with my counselor, I've seen just how greatly my parent's extreme emotional unhealth has affected me and caused me to fall into similar emotional unhealth. It's difficult to process for many reasons. There have been so many people affected by my years of emotional unhealth, including my kids, and it's heart-breaking to really press into some of the areas of my own childhood that were more traumatic than I was ever aware of. Practicing writing a grief journal this semester was a new but very needed exercise for me. After spending so much time working through past junk with my counselor, it was so important for me to just sit down with a pen and God and get out all the feelings I had about everything that was revealed to me. This kind of processing is not natural to me—I am not naturally an emotional person although I am very much growing in that area—but I've now seen so clearly how important it is for closing off chapters of my life and looking hopefully toward new ones. It is also a really powerful way for me to share hard things from my past with my husband as much of what I talk through with my counselor is not stuff I really want to dig up again but is so important for him to understand for the sake of our marriage. Letting him read through my grief journal is an easier way for me to share those things with him.

I want to keep the habit of keeping a grief journal for the sake of my emotional health and I think it would be neat to ask my sister to keep me accountable on this. It has been a really unique experience to talk through things from our upbringing that have come up in counseling with her and to be able to process through them together as she is the only other person in the world who has shared those experiences with me (although, she has been shaped by those same experiences in much different ways than me but that is part of what make sharing how we have

processed them so interesting and worthwhile). I don't think grief journaling is probably something I can realistically do super often as it is quite time-consuming and zaps a lot of my emotional energy for the day, but I think committing to a quarterly rhythm (every four months) for the next three years would be really impactful. After time with my counselor, there is a long list of things I could sit down and grieve with the Lord and slowly working through that list will be well worth the emotional growth! *I would like to commit the morning of the first Saturday of every season (March 1, June 1, September 1, December 1) to do this. Each year, when I get a new calendar, I set aside an evening to write out all of the important dates for that year in the calendar (birthdays, anniversaries, etc.) and I will add to that habit to write in Saturday morning reflective dates for that year as well. I will write this year's in now and start with my first one on June 3.*

Spiritual:

My prayer life was one of the biggest things impacted by this class this semester. In one of our very first lessons, we talked about how it important it was for leaders to have people who are regularly praying for them and their ministry. I was struck by how obviously true this was but how it had never really crossed my mind before. I have also really enjoyed using the ministry model of prayer and have experienced some rich prayer times for people using the model. I actually just spend a Saturday morning last week training all of our female group leaders to pray using that model and we all took time to pray for another lady in our group using it! It was a really encouraging morning and so many women experienced hearing from the Holy Spirit in such a real way for the first time in their life! It was powerful and left us all hooked, wanting more!

I have also talked to our pastors and asked about leading a training for our church's prayer team using the model as well. We have a group of people who stand in the back of our gathering each Sunday to pray for whoever comes up that morning but this team has never been trained at all! They are all super mature believers who certainly can pray for anyone about anything, but I think some of the ideas expressed in the ministry model of prayer (particularly the part about spending time in silence listening to the Spirit before you pray) would be super impactful to their prayer ministry and really change the experience for a lot of people. I am excited about the opportunity to do this for our church!

All that said, *I think my personal goal for my spiritual life is to pray using the ministry prayer model for each of our female city group leaders regularly.* I am the City Groups Director at our church which means one of the things I am responsible for is the care of our City Group leaders. I have had the habit of praying for these leaders for many years but it usually just looks like me keeping a list of their needs and spending one morning a week praying through the list—which is definitely not a bad thing—but now that I've seen the power of praying with the person and with an eye out for the Spirit I just see so much more fruit and power in this model instead! *So, I would like to commit to praying for one of these ladies in person each week. Currently, our number of female City Group leaders is low so there are only about nine ladies on the list which will be pretty manageable, but as our church-plant grows over the next few years I may have to readjust this goal. I typically work on Tuesdays and Thursday so I would like to set aside my Tuesday morning and instead of going straight into work, I can go visit one of our leaders for an hour of checking in and prayer.* This is a decently large commitment, but I think the pay-off will be more than worth it! What better way is there to spend my time helping our leaders feel seen and cared for and sitting in the presence of Holy Spirit with them! I am very excited about this

goal! I plan to check in with my pastor who I report to in order to make sure he is okay with me spending my time this way (he will be thrilled) and to ask him to keep me accountable when we check in for our regular direct report meetings.