Personal Assessment & Goal Setting

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SF505: Personal/Professional/Theological Foundations for Ministry

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Socially

God's intention is for us to live in community. I have wonderful faith communities, from home church, church where I work, ATS, Eastman Library, Love New York 24/7, friends from previous churches and ex-colleague from IRC. I didn't grow up with a social life, and I know God allowed me to grow up as an introvert. I am not good at small talk and often find myself as a listener in the crowd. God has challenged me to step out of my comfort zone to extend His love to those around me, people had a hard time believing that I am an introvert. I don't want to fall in the danger of being too "contemplative" – without community and lack of accountability.

I love talking to strangers and sharing so many powerful testimonies, or praying with those within my circle, however, I know I am lacking in casual socializing. I ask God, why I have little desire to have a social life, sometimes I am confused and unsure if something is wrong with me in this department. But I thank God for allowing me to be me because I know those who understand and desire my company are those who don't mind the real talk of life! My goal for social life, I would love to catch up with friends who I have not reached out to for a while now, Rosa, Christine, Ashley, Helen, Sarah, Derri, Shevon, Ada – this Spring/Summer.

Physically

Spring 2023 was one of my most challenging years physically. I work in the library, had 4 classes, and a part time youth minister role in NJ (Fri-Sun). I used to be a workaholic, so I know what it feels like to be in physical pain, especially sitting in front of the computer for 12 hours. However, this time around it is a different type of challenge. I found myself very little room for rest. But I know I need and I want to take care of this body because I will have to rely on it to do the Kingdom work or to be a good caretaker of this body. I have yet to do any annual checkup with a doctor for over a year now. I am not really good at taking care of myself

physically. I've also gained some weight. I don't know how healthy or unhealthy I am, which is both comforting (not physical pain at the moment) and concerning. I have to make a priority for an annual check-up with a doctor and want to lose 10 pounds that I gained this year.

Cognitively

Second semester at ATS, I felt like information overload in a good way. I completed Spiritual Formation, Intro to OT, Urban Ministry CCDA conference, NT Theology, Greek Bible, Hebrew Bible, Global Theology, and PPTFM. So many authors, resources, and books to read. Especially from this class we covered so many grounds, leadership personality, I can relate myself as a "reviver", reexamining bible worldview, learning about bonded set vs centered set, the pros and cons of different pathways to God, processing grief, addressing anger and forgiveness, emotional healing and intimacy with God, review our secret life and our destiny, understanding spiritual warfare. Etc. First thing I would like to do this summer is review my notes from all classes. I would most likely come across a book and or subject I wanted to read more about. Personally, I felt most challenged by the Greek and Hebrew Bible. It is not an easy task to read and understand contextually during the culture settings of OT and NT. But I think it is extremely important for me to spend more time on it to avoid eisegesis of the biblical texts.

I also have to plan for the upcoming youth group (YG) summer retreat, for activities, sessions, and theme etc. This is my first time leading and planning for a YG retreat. I want to be diligent in preparing and researching for this retreat. It's going to be June 30th to July 2nd, thus I should have a rough idea outlined by the end of May. I want to see which elements from my learning are applicable for this retreat, and what I have to read up in addition. Three months into this role, I got to know about YG and where they are in their faith journey. For February, God gave me the word "Identity" so my sermons for that month were all about their identity in Christ.

Then in March, God said heart posture/heart condition. And April was the Kingdom of God. I thank God for giving me clear instructions for YG. I had so much joy breaking down these topics with them. I am very thankful to know Pastor David Chang, he invited me into a network of youth pastors and also gave me advice and suggestions on youth ministry. I am only taking a 1 credit field education this summer; thus, I am looking forward to spending more time reading, researching, and preparing for the YG summer retreat. My goal is to develop a powerful, impactful, fun time for YG to rest, refresh their body, mind, soul, and spirit. I also want to create an a safe (emotionally) environment for YG on Sundays at church, a space where they don't feel like they are being watched constantly; a place where they can be who they are and express their thoughts and feelings freely; a place where they can process things with God in a loving environment filled with the presence of the Holy Spirit. I would need a lot of wisdom from God on how to get there.

Emotionally

It is so important for me to be emotionally healthy, else I won't lead well. In class we learned about emotion healing, anger, forgiveness. I agree that in this sinful world, wounds inflicted on us by others and our personal sins add baggage to our soul and mind. I don't want to lead in an unhealthy way. I made that mistake at my first leadership position at IRC. As a young leader, I came to the table with my preconceived notions and unresolved emotional damage by co-workers and previous manger. I led with a tainted mentality; it caused more stress for me. When I am not well, I cannot make it about the people, I don't have the interest or time.

God taught me through tough lessons when I was being insensitive or unloving, or being too intense for others. I can clearly recall times when I was the ugliest of enneagram 1/8, at work I was known as no-nonsense person, I got things done the right and most effective way, I gave

my best day in and day out, I say things without filter aka little to no consideration of how other might perceived or received. I was too passionate about my job, the organization, the cause, and I rarely slowed down. And I really didn't care if I won people's hearts or not, my end goal was doing things with high integrity and what was best for our clients. I didn't care about work politics; I didn't do the small talk; I have no interest in coffee chat. I was mostly transactional, rarely relational. I was a high functioning robot and I operated in that mindset for 3 solid years. Even though fruits of the labor were very "good", projects finished on time, on budget, and the processes were streamlined, eliminating many manual steps, I gained and grew so much in my technical knowledge and skill sets. However, the other side of the coin was I didn't win many hearts or make many connections, or build meaningful relationships. But I thank God for disciplining me, He humble me big time through the interpersonal difficult relationships. And God gave me a chance to be a leader again, this time with a bigger scope, my last role at the IRC. This time around, I am so committed to being about relationship building over getting the job done. It was night and day when compared to the first leadership role. The most significant journey I went through between the two roles was processing my anger. I had so much anger in me from a young age, those who treated me poorly, my parents, my brother, my ex-boyfriends, with myself - there were too many hurts and anger, aka I was emotionally damaged and I didn't process it fully with God. And I thank God for showing me the root cause of my issues and healed my emotional wounds and disappointments.

It is very important to me to have a regular check-in with God. I am a spiritual being but my spiritual health is related to my emotional state, and people around me can tell when I am down or upset. I am very expressive, thus body language, facial expression, attitude, tone/voice, etc. easily reflect the emotional state I am in. I learned about the "ball of emotions" from

counseling sessions, it is a very useful tool. I will start using it when I am journaling with God. I've been journaling since I was 12 years old, I found it very helpful. Now that I know I have counseling free of charge as an ATS student, I will keep that in mind as well. If I don't process my frustrations, angers, emotional needs, and allow the Holy Spirit to heal my emotions wounds, or minister to me on a regular basis, my emotional baggage will define me and I don't think I can be effective in my ministry.

Spiritually

Spending alone time with God in stillness, simplicity, journaling, worshipping, prayer, and confession, have been my lifestyle for many years now. I don't know how to live if I don't do this on a daily/weekly basis. I thank God for teaching me these disciples since I was teenagers. I really like this quote by A.B. Simpson that I learned from the class, "It is not the eradication of the sinful nature that gives us freedom, but rather the habitation of the Holy Spirit". When I am in synced with the Holy Spirit, my life is on high notes and the moment I am too busy to nature my spirit, I live life out of my sins and flesh rather than living by the power of the Holy Spirit. Meditation, fasting, and service are relatively "new" for me, I've practiced them for about 2-4 years of doing. I thank God for teaching me to fast at different times of the year, similar to God's commandment to Israel to celebrate different festivals. In the year 2021 and 2022, I was consistent with different types of fasting: 7, 21, or 40 days count down toward Christmas, New Year, Esther, and my birthday. And during the fasting Holy Spirit nudged me to fast and pray for specific reasons as prompted. However, in 2023 I did not have a good fasting yet, and I wanted to fast especially as I am preparing for YG summer retreat. Meditation of His words and service are becoming second nature to me, and I pray God will give me heart to be faithful in this. Study is the most difficult and newest discipline; I need and want to focus. I

thank God for warning me from eisegesis, last semester was my first time learning the differences between exegesis and eisegesis. Thus, I am committed more than ever before to honor and interpret the scriptures according to the author's intent as inspired by the Holy Spirit, not what I wanted it to say or to be. Like Dean said, Spiritual Formation is not for right doctrine, right behavior, right ministry, or right experience, it leads us to the right relationship with God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit first and foremost; and we bear spiritual fruits as a result.

3-5 years from now, will be post MDiv. Currently I am enjoying this journey taking one step at a time toward my destiny. I thank God for giving me a community with I-1, I-2, and I-3, they can tell my blind spot and minister and pray for me. I really like these questions shared by Dean Ron; "personal: am I watering and weeding my own garden well? Community, am I a seed nourisher or a seed impeder with my team? Missional, do my words and my actions prepare the ground in other people's lives to receive the seed of God?" I am not sure in the ministry setting God will send me after I graduate from MDiv, but for now I will focus and live in the present. In addition to becoming a full-time minister, I know I have the desire to build bridges within different churches in the Bronx. I want to create a network of Pastors across denominations. The Body of Christ is big, complex, but in silo. Yes, God allowed nation, language, and culture, and said every nation and tongue will worship Him. However, Jesus said the world would believe in Him and in the good news when they see that we are perfectly one. So, I have this burning desire to know if all the churches (believe in the Apostle Creed) could be perfectly one as the bride of Jesus; and how God might use me in this process.