

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT & GOAL SETTING PAPER

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“Formation For Ministry” is quite the fitting title for this course because that’s exactly what it does. By the grace of God it helps to form and shape you into the person God calls you to be: Socially, Physically, Emotionally, Cognitively, and Spiritually. Throughout this paper I will give an assessment in each of these categories – detailing where I was, how this class shaped me, and how I plan on implementing what I’ve learned. Taking this class in the midst of a detrimental personal matter was quite the challenge. I almost gave up and withdrew from the class twice! But the lessons and assignments throughout this course actually helped me through my situation. Here’s how...

SOCIALLY

One day in class we were assigned to pray for one another in our triads using the Prayer Model taught in class. I was convicted right away because there was an individual in my triad who I had an ought against that I never addressed. Before we prayed in our triads, my professor, Professor Ron, was about to leave, and I asked him if I could speak with him privately. I told my professor about the matter and he said something to me that I plan to incorporate in my day-to-day life. He told me that this man was made in God’s image, and that Jesus loves him and died for him the same way He loves me and died for me. So if Jesus loves him, you ought to choose to do the same. When he said this, it struck the core of my soul and it opened my eyes to the hypocrisy of heart. In that moment I had to repent and choose God’s way.

So moving forward, I choose to view people through this lens; especially when I encounter someone that’s difficult for me to deal with. It’s easy to do this with people I get along with, but when I encounter a person I don’t naturally gel with and feel an indifference towards, I need to apply the biblical truth my professor told me in his office that day. Because I will encounter VDPs (Very Draining People), and I’m still going to have to show them the love of the

Father. Even people who have different Spiritual Instincts. Before understanding this concept I was sort of judgemental towards people who had an Activist Instinct or an Aesthetic Instinct. Now I can appreciate that person for how God wired them, as opposed to being socially indifferent toward them. These are ways I look to socially interact with people as a follower of Jesus Christ moving forward. And as I grow to appreciate and understand these differences amongst God's children, I will also be a facilitator in teaching these truths in the circles I'm currently in and will grow to be in.

By the way, a couple weeks later after that encounter in my professor's office, I spoke with the individual from my triad and we had a great discussion. We were able to reconcile our differences, and now we speak and joke together every time we see each other! It's brought me great joy to have reconciled with him.

PHYSICALLY

Over the past 3 years I've battled with depression. Emotional eating became my vice or dare I say, my idol. This may sound funny, but if gummy bears were alcohol, I'd probably be considered a pre-alcoholic. Due to my choice of vice I gained a tremendous amount of weight, I was very inconsistent in the gym, and I developed health complications that I never dealt with in my life! I had a problem and I needed to fix it. I understand that my physical health can play a huge role in my effectiveness as God's child. And if I'm developing health problems due to self-inflicting wounds, that is a problem that needs to be addressed. I am one of God's temples! I house the Holy Spirit within me, and I am charged to take care of my body according to God's Word (1 Cor. 3:16-17, 1 Cor. 6:15-20, Romans 6:13).

So with this Truth I plan on being a good steward over my body by consistently working out and eating the right foods. I've also cut down the idol of emotional eating, with no plan to

pick it up again. I do have people holding me accountable for my physical health, and I am also holding myself accountable. My goal is to be back to 185lbs by my birthday, August 7th. I also plan to maintain this weight moving forward for the years to come. My kids need me to stay healthy so I can be there for them, and that is the first ministry I look to influence above all others.

EMOTIONALLY

Depression not only took a toll on me physically, but also emotionally. When I wasn't at church, work, or in class, I was constantly in a downcast state; which led to my binge eating and lack of working out. I would let my anger get the best of me, my thoughts would spiral me into a depression, and I wasn't always able to break the sadness. It didn't help that my situation was getting worse; which goes to show that I couldn't base my emotional state on my circumstances, but only on the Solid Rock – Jesus Christ.

There was a day in class when Professor Ron had us declare Bible verses over ourselves that fit into three categories: Acceptance, Security and Significance. This was a vital reminder of the importance of knowing my true identity in Christ. It was also a reminder of the fundamental necessity of declaring the Word of God over my life! Decreeing and affirming the Truth of who God says I am and renouncing the lies of the devil. This simple, yet powerful discipline, was and is the Fire that allows me to know who I am no matter what's happening in my life! This gives me an understanding of why the joy of the Lord is my strength! Knowing my identity in Christ brings me to a better emotional state and it allows me to testify to others on why this discipline is so necessary.

Not only was decreeing important to my emotional state, but grieving was as well. When I wrote my grief journal so much came out of me that I didn't even know was there! I felt a surge

of emotions coming to the surface, and then a huge weight came out of me once I was finished writing. A few days later I started to realize that I wasn't as upset with the people I wrote about in my journal. There was so much that I needed to say to God concerning my situation and I realized even more how important it is to really let God know how you feel. This too was a huge step in understanding how to live a better emotional life.

I plan to continue these disciplines for the rest of my life. Three to five years from now, I see myself practicing this over and over again and rooting this in the hearts of my children. I desire to practice decreeing with them in the mirror so they too can have this rooted in their innermost being where no devil can root it out. I also plan on encouraging them to keep a journal to express their FULL thoughts and emotions to God so they won't carry these things for years to come. I also encourage them to speak to me and their mom, a counselor, and people they feel safe to share with. God gives us emotions, so we must feel them, but we don't have to be governed by them. This truth I pray to carry on until I see Jesus face to Face.

COGNITIVELY

"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think..." (Romans 12:2a NLT). I believe this course expanded the way I think more than every other category. This course opened my eyes to things I just didn't realize. By nature, I'm a feeler, I tend not to be much of a thinker per se. I tend to be led by my emotions more so than a well thought out process. But this class forced me to stretch my thinking.

One of the first books assigned to us *"The Word and Power Church"* opened up my mind to an arena I had no care in the world to go into. Getting a better understanding of terms like "evangelical" and "pentecostal" was eye opening for me. That book allowed me to understand

why certain people I'm connected to think the way they think, and how we as Christians can get lost in a Bounded Set rather than a Centered Set. During this course I also gained a better understanding of why we need to get to the root of our issues and how that knowledge can lead to our deliverance. It's not just casting out a devil that leads to our deliverance, it's also gaining an understanding of Truth (Proverbs 11:9b)! For instance, understanding the difference between "True Moral Guilt" and "Unbiblical Shame" makes a world of difference in my mind; which led to a transformation on how I deal with setbacks in my life. Knowing this truth is so freeing for me! It allows me to see the problem, as opposed to condemning myself as the problem.

Moving forward, I plan to read one to two trusted biblical books every one to two months. But first and foremost, I plan to increase my intake of the Word of God. I also need to revisit the lessons learned in this class because we learned so much that I will need to go over them again and again so that they are embedded in my soul. I also plan to apply more biblical meditation when studying the Bible. This discipline will certainly help shape the way I think. Prayer and God's Word must be at the forefront of my life in order for God to continually change the way I think. If not, I'll become stagnant and wouldn't be able to flow with the moving of God's Spirit. Which leads me to my final category...

SPIRITUALLY

"Initiation In Spiritual Formation" taught me more about my personal intimacy with God. "Formation For Ministry" expounded on that truth. This course showed me how much MORE I need to go deeper with God when He calls me into community ministry. Community is not limited to the four walls of the church. Community includes my family, my neighbors, men's fellowships, my workspace and more. I'm learning how to deal and interact with others, while keeping myself spiritually healthy. Like my physical health, my spiritual health is not just for

me! It's for those who surround me as well. As God enlarges my capacity to be more involved in community, whether that community is my family, my church, social media, etc., He's drawing me into deeper intimacy with Him. Being formed for ministry forces me into deeper intimacy with the Father. As God is calling me into ministry in this season of my life, He's allowing me to see my desperate need for Him in order to do the work He's calling me to. I've missed the mark of a deeper calling into the secret place when I did "ministry" in the past. My deep devotional life with God became shallow. I've missed that mark TOO MANY TIMES! The fact that God is calling me to ministry does not also mean that He's calling me out of the secret place. No! My calling should lead me closer to the Feet of Jesus and not away from Him.

By God's grace, I am answering this call. The practical knowledge that I'm getting in this course leads me to prayer, rather than thinking my education and smooth talk can solve the issues. I look to serve under leaders at my church and learn from them. I depend on God to kill the spirit of pride that chases me wherever I go. I'm thankful that I have accountability partners in place and leaders at my church that encourage me, call out my blindspots, pray for me and so much more. Because in order for me to grow spiritually, I have to be in community. My primary community though is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I plan to nurture this community by fasting once to twice a week, praying more often throughout the day, and diving into God's Word everyday.

In conclusion, "Formation for Ministry" has helped me realize that there's more to ministry than preaching a sermon and leading small groups. There's a lot of personal growth that's needed in order to sustain and be a healthy servant leader. This all stems from our intimacy with the Father. Because like Jesus said, "...*apart from Me you can do nothing.*" (John 15:5). I am so grateful that Jesus is my source – the True former of my soul and ministries. Amen...