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Lipscomb University  
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**Spiritual Formation, Part 1**

**Course Description**

The spiritual formation of leaders is a key commitment of the Hazelip School of Theology and is central to the entire M.Div. program. The two courses of Spiritual Formation are designed to nurture the student’s personal participation in the formative work of the Holy Spirit for life and mission with God. Spiritual Formation, Part 1, focuses on our participation in the *life* of the Triune God, emphasizing the God and self↔church relation and the resulting *human formation* that occurs in union with God. Spiritual Formation, Part 2, focuses on our participation in the *mission* of the Triune God, and will emphasize the God, self↔church, and world relation and the *missional formation* that occurs in co-laboring with God in the world. The overall aim of both courses is to establish students in a spiritually-vital, sustainable way of life in union with the Triune God for mission in the contemporary context. This course is also designed to introduce students to the theological, historical, and ecclesial dynamics of Christian spirituality and spiritual formation. Both the personal-experiential and critical-reflective forms of knowledge are essential in the formation of students for Christian life and mission. Beginning with a five-day retreat, this course is built upon the dynamic interaction between experience and reflection.

**Objectives**

1. Students will grow in love for the Triune God and in awareness of God’s love for them.
2. Students will become more aware of their relationship with God and the formative experiences of their lives.
3. Students will discover historic and theological themes of Christian spirituality and spiritual formation.
4. Students will understand the nature of Christian spiritual life and spiritual formation in the light of Christian theology.
5. Students will think through the role of movements and traditions in spiritual formation.
6. Students will engage and reflect upon formative practices of the Christian tradition as part of their own spiritual formation.
7. Students will develop a rule of life, envisioning and implementing a rhythm of life that is helpful, sustainable, and fitting with their current season of life toward intentional participation and enjoyment of the Holy Spirit’s formative work in their lives.
## Objectives and Measurements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>How Delivered</th>
<th>How Assessed</th>
<th>Goals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grow in love for the Triune God and in awareness of God’s love for them</td>
<td>Readings, lecture, online discussions, written assignments, small group meetings, spiritual direction</td>
<td>Written project</td>
<td>Acknowledgement in written projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Become more aware of their relationship with God and the formative experiences of their lives</td>
<td>Group exercise</td>
<td>Group exercise</td>
<td>Group exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discover historic and theological themes of Christian spirituality and spiritual formation</td>
<td>Readings, lecture, online discussions</td>
<td>Course interaction, online posts, written project</td>
<td>Successful identification in written projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understand the nature of Christian spiritual life and spiritual formation in the light of Christian theology</td>
<td>Readings, lecture, online discussions</td>
<td>Verbal assessments, online posts, written project</td>
<td>Successful identification in written projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Think through the role of movements and traditions in spiritual formation</td>
<td>Readings, lectures, online discussions</td>
<td>Written project</td>
<td>Successful identification in written projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage and reflect upon formative practices of the Christian tradition toward spiritual formation</td>
<td>Readings, lecture, online discussions</td>
<td>Online posts</td>
<td>Engagement and reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a rule of life, envisioning and implementing a rhythm of life toward their own spiritual formation</td>
<td>Readings, lecture, written assignments</td>
<td>Written project</td>
<td>Successful construction of a rule of life</td>
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Course Requirements
The first gathering of the spiritual formation course is a five-day retreat on August 24-28. There are assignments to be completed prior to and after the retreat.

Pre-Retreat Assignments. Admittance to the retreat is dependent upon your completion of two pre-retreat assignments.

1. *Outline your personal history of relationship with God.* In preparation for the retreat, students will prepare a 1-3 page outline of the history of their relationship with God thus far. The outline should be organized by their most formative experiences and relationships (both positive and negative) that influenced their relationship with God. Students are encouraged to pay attention to God’s work and their responses in each of those experiences and relationships. Students should submit this outline to the professor one week before arriving at the retreat. These outlines are due **August 17** and are to be emailed as a Word attachment to kris.miller@lipscomb.edu. Furthermore, this outline will serve as a guide for students to share from as part of the retreat experience. Students will not be expected or asked to share anything which they are not comfortable sharing. In order to promote a safe atmosphere for sharing, all retreat participants, both students and faculty, will promise confidentiality to one another. Furthermore, other guidelines for how we respond to one another as we share will be given orally at the retreat to foster a culture of safety, mutual respect, and growth.

2. *Read the assigned texts and submit a written response.* Reading is a spiritual discipline in which the Spirit of God forms us. Students are to read the following three sources and submit written responses that demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the material. Students are to read (a) Evan B. Howard, *The Brazos Introduction to Christian Spirituality*, chapters 1-6, pages 13-227, writing an approximate one-page response per chapter (totaling approximately 6 pages); (b) Leonard Allen and Danny Swick, *Participating in God’s Life*, all chapters, pages 15-196, writing an approximate one-page response for the entire book; (c) Clark Pinnock, *Flame of Love*, chapter 5 only, pages 149-183, writing an approximate one-page response for this chapter. (Clark Pinnock’s book *Flame of Love* does not need to be purchased. A copy of the chapter will be posted online for students to read.) The written responses are due one week before the students arrive for the retreat. They are due on **August 17** and are to be emailed as Word attachments to kris.miller@lipscomb.edu.

It will also be good for students to read chapter 9, “A Rule of Life,” in Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation* before the retreat. No written reflection on this chapter is required, but we will discuss it at the retreat. Each of these pre-retreat readings will help prepare you for the retreat.
The Retreat

Students will meet for a five-day retreat on August 24-28. This retreat will simultaneously serve as a class and as the beginning of the two-year M.Div. cohort experience. This retreat will provide space to begin healthy relationships, to explore spiritual practices, and to establish a culture of safety and growth. Commensurate with the nature of spiritual formation, this retreat will combine the academic rigor of a master’s-level course and the experience of a retreat, holding together the personal-experiential and critical-reflective components that are inherent within spiritual formation. This retreat will lead students through daily rhythms of formational experiences, including fixed-hour prayer, silence and solitude, sharing and listening to stories of their personal histories with God, listening and responding to lectures, and others. The focus of this retreat will be our personal experience and relationship with God. Prepare to be stretched and deeply blessed.

Post-Retreat Assignments

1. *Experiment with fitting spiritual practices and reflect upon your experience in a weekly online discussion.* Engaging in spiritual practices and reflecting on your experiences is one of the most important aspects of this course. The best spiritual practices are those which are congruent with the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives and appropriate to our current life context. You are invited to select 1, or perhaps 2, spiritual disciplines, to engage in a meaningful and consistent way throughout this course. You will be asked to share about your practice and how God is using it to form you on an online threaded post on Friday’s throughout the course (Sep. 4 through December 4). You are also invited to experiment with and share about other spiritual practices that seem inviting to you from your reading of *Sacred Rhythms* by Ruth Haley Barton and *Christian Spiritual Formation* by Diane J. Chandler. For your online posts, simply answer the questions, “How is your experiment with spiritual practices going? What is happening within you as you practice?”

2. *Discuss selected readings using online discussion.* A helpful way to more fully digest the readings communally is to share your thoughtful response with your classmates, and to hear their responses. As a learning community, we help one another read and respond more broadly and fully than simply reading alone. We will share our responses to *Sacred Rhythms* by Ruth Haley Barton and *Christian Spiritual Formation* by Diane J. Chandler through an online threaded discussion on Friday’s from September 4 through October 23. The chapters, page numbers and due dates are listed in the course schedule below.

3. *Read the assigned texts and submit a written response.* Students are to read Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water*, chapters 1-3, only, pages 1-96, submitting an approximate one-page response per chapter (totaling approximately 3 pages) that
demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the material. This written response is due one week before the students arrive for the final class meeting on Wednesday, October 28. They are due on **October 21** and are to be emailed as Word attachments to kris.miller@lipscomb.edu.

4. **Write an approximate 10-12 page paper to develop a theology of relationship with God.** Toward developing an inhabitable theology of spiritual formation, what do we mean by “relationship with God”? This paper should engage at least five of the following topics: Trinity, Creation, Humanity, Sin, *Missio Dei*, Israel, the Exodus, the experience of God, the “dirt philosophy,” spiritual disciplines/practices (in general or one in particular). This paper should incorporate your readings and your reflections from your experiences of this course, and perhaps relevant readings from your other two courses, *Exodus* and *The Mission of God*.

*This paper should include approximately 2-3 pages of your vision of the “good life,” that is, what it means for you to live well in relationship God.* This section of the paper will assist you in articulating your personal vision of human flourishing, your vision of a good life with God. Our visions of a good life are an important part of our relationship with God and thus spiritual formation. We live out of our notions of what is good, faithful, and healthy. Descriptions of what is “good,” “faithful,” and “healthy” are ethical statements, shaping the kind of life we aspire to live. This portion of the paper should give attention to the (a) physical, (b) mental/emotional, and (c) spiritual dimensions of your vision of a good and healthy life. (Next semester, in Part Two, we will give attention to the relational, vocational, financial, and temporal dimensions.) Learning to steward these essential dimensions of ourselves is not only an important aspect of spiritual formation, but a vital dimension of our well-being and longevity in ministry. This concluding paper is due on **Wednesday, December 9** and is to be emailed as a Word attachment to kris.miller@lipscomb.edu.

5. **Write a rule of life, envisioning a rhythm that is life-giving, sustainable, and fitting with your current circumstances toward spiritual formation.** “A rule of life seeks to respond to two questions: Who do I want to be? How do I want to live? Actually, it might be more accurate to say that a rule of life seeks to address the interplay between these two questions: *How do I want to live so I can be who I want to be?*” (Barton, 147). With its origins in monastic communities, a rule of life has been compared to a trellis, a support structure that enables intentional, healthy growth. Oftentimes, a rule of life outlines the daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly practices which you desire to implement in order to grow. Through exposure, experimentation with various disciplines, and discussion, students will refine and implement a rule of life. Some aspects of this rule the cohort will share together in that all students will commit to certain practices for the duration of the M.Div. cohort experience. (See the “Our Community’s Rule of Life.”) Most aspect will be
personal. Students will write a draft of this rule at the beginning of the semester during the retreat and will revise it throughout the semester. Students will post it to share with their cohort for mutual learning and encouragement. This assignment is due on **Wednesday, December 9**.

**Required Reading**


*The above three books marked with an asterisk will be used for both semesters, Spiritual Formation Parts 1 and 2.*

*Students do not need to purchase the following book. Instead, this additional chapter will be posted online for students to read:*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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| Mon., Aug. 17 | Outline of personal history with God  
Read and submit a written response:  
Howard, chaps. 1-6, pgs. 13-227  
Allen & Swick, chaps. 1-8, pgs. 23-196  
Pinnock, chap. 5, pgs. 149-183 |
| Mon., Aug. 24 | Barton, chap. 9, pgs. 146-166                                               |
| Fri., Sep. 4  | Spiritual practice online post  
Read and respond online:  
Barton, chap. 1, pgs. 19-28;  
Chandler, chap. 1, pgs. 15-26; |
| Fri., Sep. 11 | Spiritual practice online post  
Read and respond online:  
Barton, chap. 2, pgs. 29-44;  
Chandler, chap. 2, pgs. 27-41. |
| Fri., Sep. 18 | Spiritual practice online post  
Read and respond online:  
Barton, chap. 3, pgs. 45-61;  
| Fri., Sep. 25 | Spiritual practice online post  
Read and respond online:  
Barton, chap. 4, pgs. 62-77;  
Chandler, chap. 4, pgs. 66-82. |
| Fri., Oct. 2 | Spiritual practice online post  
Read and respond online:  
Barton, chap. 5, pgs. 78-90;  
Chandler, chap. 9, pgs. 180-218. |
| Fri., Oct. 9 | Spiritual practice online post  
Read and respond online:  
Barton, chap. 6, pgs. 91-109;  
| Fri., Oct. 16| Spiritual practice online post  
Read and respond online:  
Barton, chap. 7, pgs. 110-129;  
Chandler, chap. 6, pgs. 106-126. |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed., Oct. 21</td>
<td>In preparation for the final class meeting, read and submit a written response: Foster, chap. 1-3, pgs. 1-96;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri., Oct. 23</td>
<td>Spiritual practice online post Read and respond online: Barton, chap. 8. pgs. 130-145; Chandler, chap. 7, pgs. 127-150.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed., Oct. 28</td>
<td>Final Class Meeting</td>
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<td>Fri., Nov. 6</td>
<td>Spiritual practice online post</td>
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<td>Fri., Nov. 13</td>
<td>Spiritual practice online post</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri., Nov. 20</td>
<td>Spiritual practice online post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri., Nov. 27</td>
<td>Thanksgiving: engage family and friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri., Dec. 4</td>
<td>Spiritual practice online post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed., Dec. 9</td>
<td>Theology of Spiritual Formation paper due “Rule of Life” due</td>
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**Grading Scale**

All requirements for this course will be graded on a pass or fail basis. If the student completes an assignment, demonstrating meaningful engagement and understanding, the student will pass that assignment. If the student does not complete an assignment, or does not demonstrate meaningful engagement or understanding, then the student will not pass that assignment and will be asked to repeat it until successfully completed. Successful completion of all requirements will result in a pass.

No “incompletes” will be given except for extreme emergency for the student or his/her immediate family. Failure to submit an assignment will result in a failing grade for the course.

**Academic Integrity**

In keeping with our identity as a Christian University and our goal to help shape lifelong disciples of Christ, academic integrity will be taken very seriously in this class. Unless specific permission is given to collaborate on assignments with other students, each student’s work shall be his/her own. Cheating on exams or assignments and plagiarizing on written assignments will, depending on the severity of the case, result in penalties ranging from a significantly reduced grade on the assignment to failing the course. Instances of cheating or plagiarism may also be reported to appropriate members of the administration, depending on the situation. Decisions in these matters rest with the instructor. For information on
Lipscomb’s policies and procedures see the “Academic Integrity” page on Lipscomb’s website (http://academics.lipscomb.edu/content.asp?CID=5329&SID=12)

**Dropping the Course**
A decision to stop participating in the class or to not turn in assignments does not constitute dropping the course. Please see the "Graduate Catalog" for the official policies and procedures for dropping a course. If a student's name appears on the roster at grading time and the course has not been officially dropped, he/she will receive a grade based on the course requirements and grading percentages above.

**Students Requiring Accommodations**
If you require accommodations for a documented disability, please discuss your circumstances with the instructor ASAP, preferably prior to the beginning of class. If you are entitled to accommodations but have not yet registered with the Counseling Center, contact that office immediately at 615-966-1781.