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<td>Get more acquainted with group.</td>
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SESSION 1: Introduction to Identity

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Read session and complete questions, pp. 13-14.

• Spiritual Formation is:
  • A Process
  • The formation of Christ’s character in us.
  • Only accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit at work in believers’ lives.
  • Something that happens in the context of Christian community.
  • Founded on Scripture
  • Holistic
  • Something that results in a life of service to others and witness for Christ.

• The story of the Bible is the story of God.
  • Creation
  • Fall
  • Redemption
  • Renewal

SESSION 2: The Image of God

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Read session and complete questions, pp. 18-19.

• We were created with a purpose - “to glorify God and enjoy him forever.”
• Four aspects of the creation story that deserve careful attention in the exploration of identity.
  • An intimate relationship with God.
  • An unmatched dignity in creation.
  • A life of purpose.
  • Life together in community.

• The Image of God and the Fall
  • Born into a state of alienation from God and a tendency to pursue sin.
• Our sinful state corrupts our view of ourselves and others
• Creation, Redemption, and Spiritual Formation
  • Through Christ, the alienation between God and man has been overcome.
  • The Spirit works in us to overcome the effects of sin.

SESSION 3: Design
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Read session, complete questions on pp. 25-26 and do life inventory exercise 1 on pp. 27-30.
• The essence of Christian spirituality is captured in Jesus identifying the “greatest commandment” (Matthew 22:37-40; Mark 12:29-31).
  • Jesus commands us to relate properly to God.
  • Jesus commands us to relate properly to other people.
• Part of God’s creative design for each person includes their unique style of relating (temperament) and their unique capacities for service (gifts).
  • Temperament - Style of relating
    • Has implications for the ways that we relate both to God and to other people.
    • Understanding the temperament of others helps us to love and lead them well.
  • Gifts - Capacities for service
    • Given “for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:27), so that “the Body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:12).
    • Be on guard against gift envy.
    • It is God’s sovereign choice to gift us as he has.

SESSION 4: Heritage
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Read session, complete questions on p. 34 and do life inventory exercise 2 on pp. 35-36.
• We are born into families, communities, and cultures that deeply shape us.
  • Family heritage
    • Learn about gender
    • Learn about race and ethnicity
• Learn about politics
• Learn about religion
• Dominant cultural heritage
  • Shapes our perception of meaning
  • Shapes our perception of value
  • Shapes our perception of identity
• Racial and ethnic heritage
  • We are first and foremost brothers and sisters in Christ.
  • Suggesting that race does not matter is to ignore the fact that our diversity is a part of God’s creative intention for his image bearers.

SESSION 5: Our Identity in Christ

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Read session, complete questions on p. 41.

• Spiritual formation is the process of learning to live out who we are “in Christ.”
  • Individual Identity
  • Corporate Identity
• Saints
  • Positional Identity
  • Manifested in our lives and in our communities
• Already/Not Yet
  • We are no longer what we once were, but we are not yet what we will one day be.
  • “This life therefore, is not righteousness, but growth in righteousness, not health but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it; the process is not yet finished but it is going on. This is not the end but it is the road; all does not yet gleam in glory but all is being purified.” Martin Luther
• False Identities
  • Look for our identity in the wrong place or confuse our identity with our roles.
• We can simply be guilty of believing things about ourselves that are in conflict with what the Bible says is true of our new identity in Christ.

SESSION 6: Belief

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Read session, complete questions on p. 47 and do life inventory exercise 3 on pp. 48-53.

• Are there discrepancies between our theology and in the ways that we actually operate in life?
  • The struggle to believe
    • Genuine sense of intellectual uncertainty
    • Unmet expectations
    • Reality of pain in our lives
    • Chose to cherish sin
  • Responding to our doubts and disconnects
    • We must be honest with ourselves
    • We must be honest with God
    • We must be honest with our trusted friends

SESSION 7: Practices

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Read session, complete questions on pp. 59-60 and do life inventory exercise 4 on pp. 61-64.

• Progress in spiritual formation does not come by accident or chance. The Spirit’s transforming power is available to us all and comes to us only as a gift. But we have a responsibility to receive that gift.
  • Attending - Paying attention to the Spirit’s presence and activity in our lives
  • Availing - Opening ourselves to the Spirit’s transforming power

• Spiritual Disciplines
  • Hearing God in Scripture
  • Prayer
  • Fasting
  • Service
SESSION 8: Virtues

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Read session, complete questions on p. 68 and do life inventory exercise 5 on pp. 69-72.

• Virtue: An established disposition of character to act in morally praiseworthy ways appropriate to the situation acquired through habituated patterns of behavior.
  • Focuses less on actions and more on the people we are who engages in those actions.
  • Relies on the understanding of the will of God and his design for human flourishing.
  • Knowing how to act in a given situation
  • Virtue is shaped over an extended period of time by engaging in habits and practices that shape character.

• Our Vision
  • Have a pattern to follow
  • Christ’s life is our model of the “with-God life”

• Our Communities
• Our Stories
  • Christ-like virtue is ultimately not within our power
  • We cannot be passive in this process

SESSION 9 & 10: Life Inventory Presentations

ASSIGNMENT DUE: Do life inventory exercise game plan on p. 75.

• Formulate a personal plan for targeted attention and growth, helping each other to identify strengths to engage and weaknesses to refine.
  • People - Who do you know that can model what you are pursuing and who can help you reach this goal?
  • Resources - What books can you read, classes can you attend, activities you can engage in, etc., to help you develop in the areas under consideration?
  • Action Steps - What specific steps need to be taken to give sustained attention to areas under consideration?
  • Barriers - What barriers might be encountered as you seek to grow in the areas under consideration?