



WHAT IS SPIRITUAL FORMATION?

Today, there is a great deal of debate about Spiritual Formation and there are many differing opinions about what it is and how to define it. At Fairfax, we have spent a great deal of time in prayer, fasting, and study in order to seek the Lord and what He says concerning Spiritual Formation and how that impacts His body here. It should be said that we align ourselves with no special group of individuals that have made claims concerning Spiritual Formation. Instead, we recognized the inevitability of Spiritual Formation for those who seek the Lord and decided to be intentional about our efforts to foster that growth.

Therefore, it is our desire to do all we can (through God's power and the leading of His Spirit) to ensure that the family of God at Fairfax seeks to "Deepen biblical understanding that increases spiritual maturity" both on an individual level and as a collective whole. We seek to allow God's Word infiltrate all areas of life and ministry as a guide and filter for all we do. We recognize that as humans we will often fail at this, but we trust in God and His might to lead us in these efforts. We only wish that He alone may receive all glory and honor and that we (as a family) are recognized simply as His children who love and follow the Father.

The following is information concerning the "HOW?" that was revealed to us by our Lord. We are confident of this revelation and recognize that He may continue to adapt it as He grows us and leads ever closer to Him.

THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION TEAM:

Claypoole, Jack
Holder, Deb
Jeffrey, Sam
McKinney, Phil
Miller, Mike

Morris, Andrea
Nault, Alecia
Oltmann, Benn
Oltmann, Laura
Phillips, Dwayne

Fairfax
CHURCH OF CHRIST

PURPOSE OF THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION TEAM

- **To ensure that church efforts (through various ministries) contribute in some way to:**
 - *Deepen biblical understanding that increases spiritual maturity.*
- **Assists ministry leaders and teachers** to understand “spiritual maturity” and how their efforts assist with developing spiritual maturity.
 - *We desire to do this as an expression of Christian belief and practices and as a feedback mechanism that contributes to maturing one in his or her belief.*
- **The means by which this purpose is conducted:**
 - An intentional Biblical education program
 - Two-year rotation (Connected to our two-year Bible reading plan “Not On Bread Alone”)
 - Helping members grow in their understanding of God’s will and what it means to be a Christian.
 - Ministries
 - Opportunities or mechanisms to put Christianity into action.

SPECIFIC TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Develop a common vision for spiritual maturity for the ministries at FXCC
- Equip Ministry Leaders
- Help ministry leaders call members into service
- Encourage new expressions of ministry and allow old ministries to die when ministry is no longer needed
- Coordinate budgeting activities for assigned ministries
- Exhibit healthy partnership in ministry

DEFINITION OF SPIRITUAL MATURITY

- **Definition:** **An ever-increasing ability to apply God’s Word to life.**
- **Spiritual Maturity** is evident in an individual when one’s faith:
 - Serves as the catalyst for how and why one thinks about things.
 - Faith creates the lens through which life is seen. (2 Corinthians 4:18; Ephesians 1:17-23)
 - Faith motivates and shapes thinking. (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16; Hebrews 3:1)
 - Provides the means and focal point for “centering” oneself.

- Faith gives certainty in an uncertain world, surety when life is anything but sure. (Luke 1:3-4; John 17:8; Hebrews 11:1)
- Faith provides the ability to weather life's storms and experience joy. (Matthew 11:28-30; 2 Corinthians 4:7-12, 16-17)
- Defines one's interaction with others.
 - Faith is the lens through which one recognizes and responds to needs. (Galatians 6:10; Philippians 2:1-4; 1 John 3:18)
 - Faith is the motivation for being supportive and edifying (building up). (Ephesians 4:11-16)
 - Faith in Christ is being Christ-like in our love, concern, care, and compassion. (Ephesians 4:29-5:2)
- Defines and shapes how one deals with the world. (John 17:13-19; Romans 12:1-2)

HOLY AND WHOLLY LIVING

(The Shema and Greatest Command)

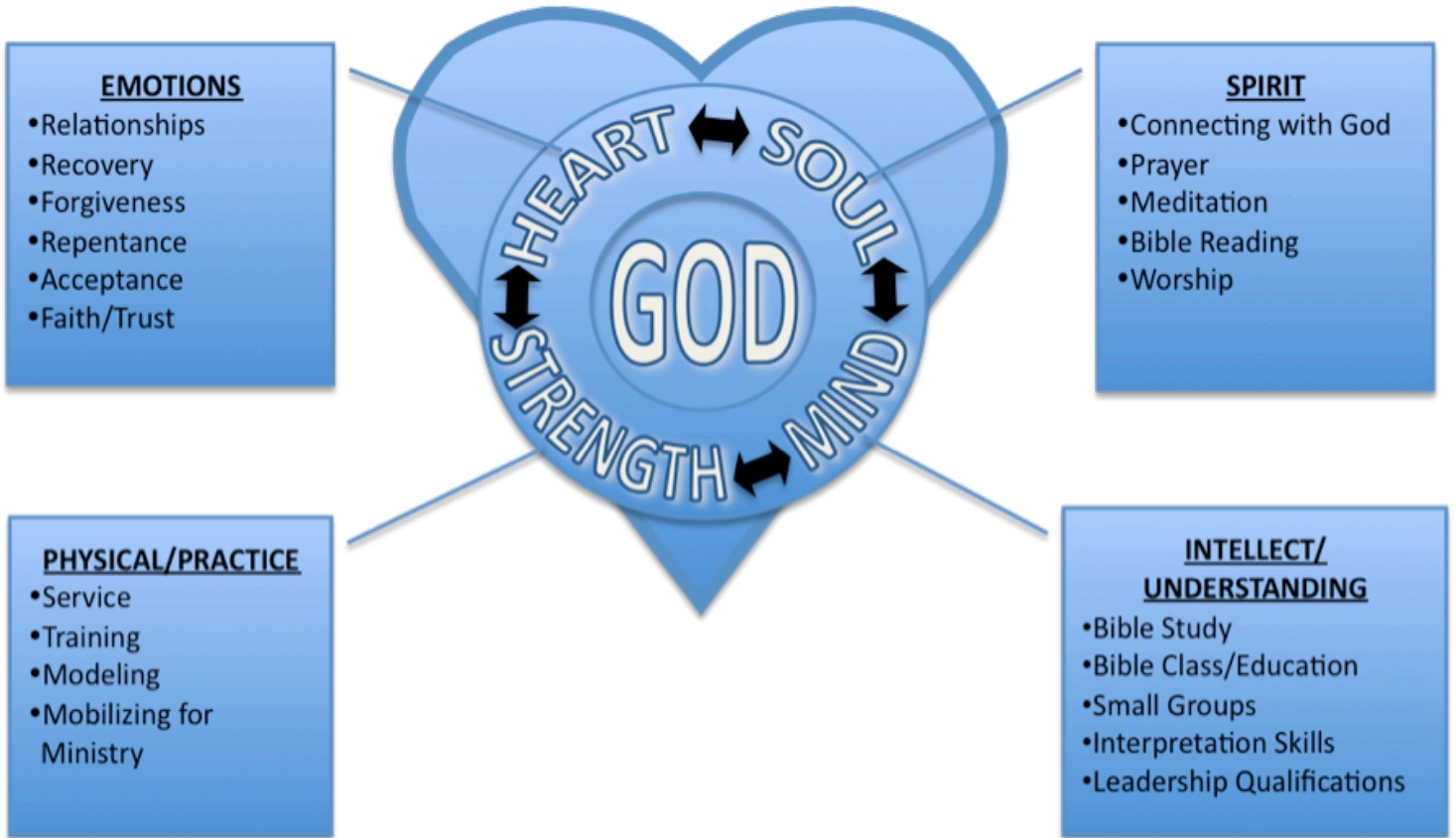
We are called to both Holy and Wholly Living. This means that God sets us apart (Holy) as His children and asks that we love Him not in part, but in whole—Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength (Wholly)(The Shema - Deut. 6:4-5; The Greatest Command - Matt. 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34). God desires to have a deep and intimate relationship with His children because of His great love for them.

God initiates this relationship with His children through His Spirit. The Spirit connects with us through our spirit and then infiltrates all other areas of our being. Once we have accepted this relationship, we begin to form spiritually as God has found “good soil” (Matthew 13:3-8; 18-23) that is receptive to His Word (both Jesus [the Word] and the written Word). Therefore, He wishes to till and prepare that “good soil” so that it can grow and bear His good fruit. God tills and prepares this “good soil” in us through our Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength. Therefore, a potential feedback mechanism with individuals and ministries at Fairfax could include the following questions:

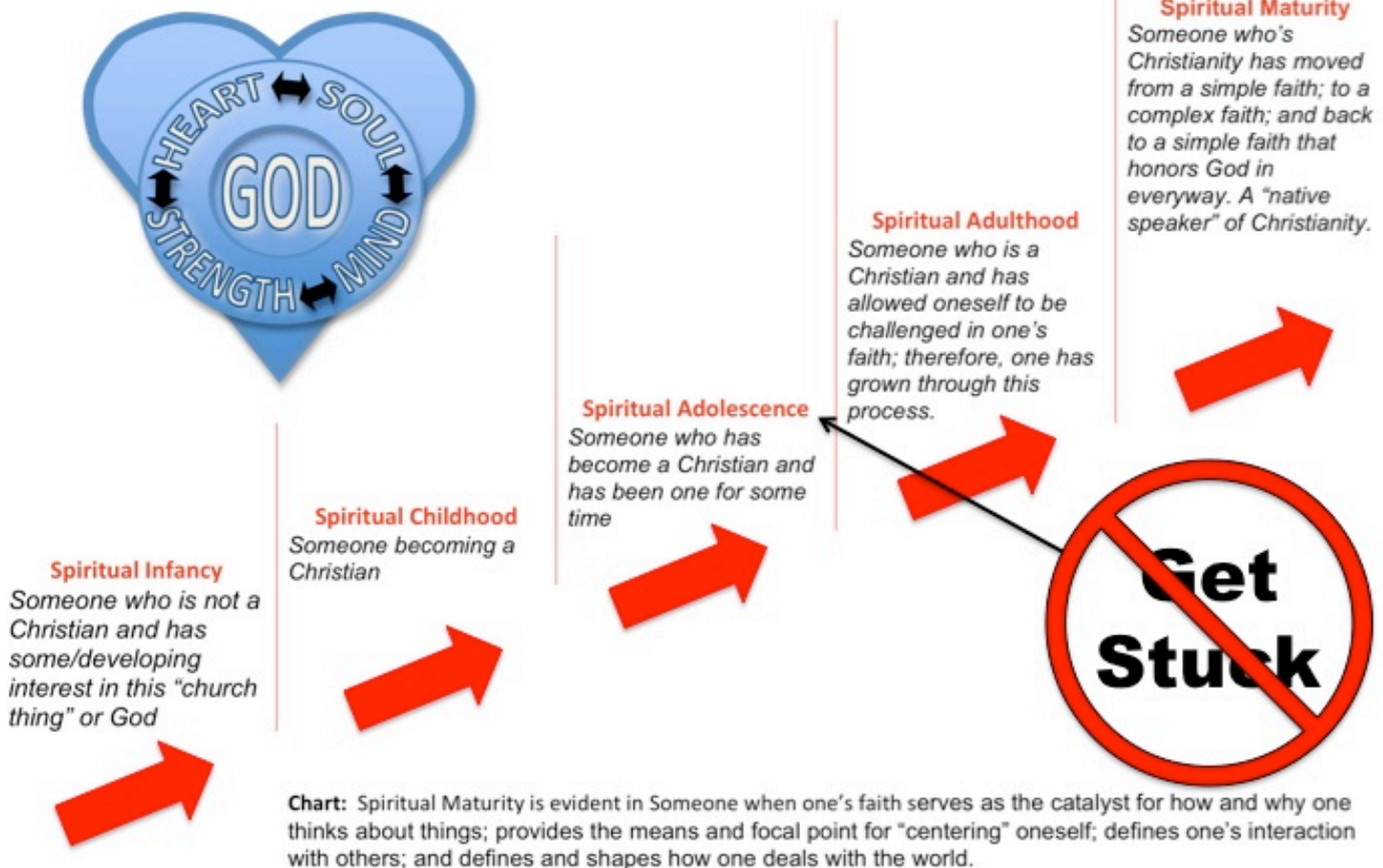
- 1) *What are you doing (or is your ministry doing) to intentionally till and prepare the soil of the **HEART** (emotional-self) so that you (or the people you are ministering to) may form a healthy relationship with God and with one another?*
- 2) *What are you (or is your ministry doing) to intentionally till and prepare the soil of the **SOUL** (spirit) so that you (or the people you are ministering to) may be receptive to God?*
- 3) *What are you (or is your ministry doing) to intentionally till and prepare the soil of the **MIND** (thoughts, intellect), with the renewing of the mind, so that you (or the people you are ministering to) can think and reason according to the Scriptures?*

4) *What are you (or is your ministry doing) to intentionally till and prepare the soil of STRENGTH (faith and love in action) so that you (or the people you are ministering to) are prepared for works of service and evangelism to build up the family of God?*

**Adapted from David Posthuma's Spiritual Formation Ministry Model (2005)*



The Spiritual Formation Continuum



PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT TOWARD SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Indicators for Each Phase

SPIRITUAL INFANCY

Someone who is not a Christian and has some/developing interest in this "church thing" or God

HEART (Emotions)

- Is heavily influenced by the world
- Lacks trust in relationships

- Struggles with feelings of acceptance (“Can I come? Do you mean me, too?”)
- Questions whether forgiveness is possible

SOUL (Spirit)

- Inherited/Passed-Down Faith
- Seek God through prayer or Bible reading only when in need
 - **QUESTIONS:**
 - Is there a God and who is this Jesus?
 - What does Jesus mean to me?

MIND (Intellect/Understanding)

- Has little to no Biblical knowledge
- Little understanding of moral absolutes
- Learning occurs one-on-one with a minister or close personal friend

STRENGTH (Physical/Practice)

- Little to no practice of faith

Needs

- Worship: **Observer**
- Develop relationships through:
 - FXCC 101
 - Bible classes
 - Small groups (for connection purposes)
 - Gender specific activities (Men’s breakfast, ladies Bible class, etc.)
 - Helping at service opportunities
 - Etc.

SPIRITUAL CHILDHOOD

Someone becoming a Christian

HEART (Emotions)

- The beginning stage of trust in God and His people (need for relationships).
- Forgiveness is possible, but still questioned

SOUL (Spirit)

- Faith is taught versus owned (e.g. – “I heard a Brother say...” versus “I believe...”)
- Personal Bible reading and prayer are sporadic

MIND (Intellect/Understanding)

- Exposure to basic Biblical principles that builds a framework (“rule set”) that guides thinking and development
- Learning comes through Sunday morning sermons

STRENGTH (Physical/Practice)

- Begin understanding the need to serve, but self will take precedence over service

Needs

- Worship: ***From Observer to Participant (24/7)***
- Begin practicing “Acts of Righteousness”
- Deepen relationships though:
 - Bible classes
 - Small groups (for depth)
 - Gender specific activities (Men’s breakfast, ladies Bible class, etc.)
 - Helping at service opportunities
 - Etc.

SPIRITUAL ADOLESCENCE

[A STAGE WHERE SOME GET STUCK]

Someone who has become a Christian and has been one for some time

HEART (Emotions)

- Begins to find a place and what one can do in the midst of community (at Fairfax) by recognizing one’s own Spiritual gifts and how they can be used
- Feels forgiven and accepted in the Church

SOUL (Spirit)

- Begin to see oneself in the story of faith rather than just know the story of faith
- Growth is seen as the individual moves from a faith based on external direction/motivation to one that is grounded in a unique identity found only in Christ
 - The goal is to move from an inherited/obligated faith to a faith built on convictions
- Personal Bible reading and prayer occur most days

MIND (Intellect/Understanding)

- Biblical principles begin to connect to practice in daily life
- The Christian begins to ask “What do I believe and why?” for a deeper understanding of the link between Biblical principles and practice
- Learning occurs in Bible classes and Small Groups

STRENGTH (Physical/Practice)

- The Christian feels obligated to serve and share his or her faith (though this occurs infrequently)

Needs

- Worship: ***From Participant to Contributor***
- Discover Spiritual Gifts through assessment/mentoring (for feedback)
- Begin involvement in ministry
- Help teach a Bible class
- Practicing “Acts of Righteousness” becomes a habit
- Deepen relationships though:
 - Mentoring
 - Accountability group

SPIRITUAL ADULTHOOD

Someone who is a Christian and has allowed oneself to be challenged in one’s faith; therefore, one has grown through this process.

HEART (Emotions)

- Is maturing in faith when one can look beyond oneself to the care, love, and nurture of others

SOUL (Spirit)

- Beginning to enjoy daily communion with God through prayer, study, worship, etc. (that has become reflective, thoughtful, contemplative) as a daily practice of living God’s grace that informs every act, word, or thought
- Living the process of building a liberating faith rather than a restrictive one
- Faith reaches the crisis of re-entrenching to a more simplistic form of faith (Spiritual Adolescence or earlier) or one that is thoughtful and discipleship oriented

MIND (Intellect/Understanding)

- Foundation is firm enough to discuss Biblically prescribed issues while being able to differentiate prescribed from traditional practices
- The challenge is the formation of a thoughtful simplicity (i.e. – The ability to reflect on complex issues yet find the peace that comes with simplicity)

STRENGTH (Physical/Practice)

- Learning occurs through practice as one finds oneself teaching, leading service projects, becoming a ministry leader, mentoring others, etc.

Needs

- Worship: ***From Contributor to Initiator***
- Initiate ministries

- Initiate worship opportunities
- Initiate a Bible class/study
- Initiate a Small group
- Practice “Acts of Righteousness” daily and help others through mentoring
- Initiate relationships through:
 - Mentoring others
 - Small group
 - Accountability group
 - Service opportunities

SPIRITUAL MATURITY

Someone whose Christianity has moved from a simple faith; to a complex faith; and back to a simple faith that honors God in every way. A “native speaker” of Christianity.

HEART (Emotions)

- At this stage, one desires what God desires. Implying that one’s emotional life has been transformed and formed
- Self-surrender is central to this stage and is revealed in one’s actions, but comes first from one’s surrender to Jesus as Lord of their life
- Faith is marked by a trust, confidence, and hope in God that has developed over time

SOUL (Spirit)

- Faith is owned and can be explained and shared
- Personal Bible reading and prayer are like breathing - it just happens!

MIND (Intellect/Understanding)

- Learning is Self-Directed
- Augmenting knowledge/study (history, evolution of doctrine, comparative studies, etc.)
- Deeper, more nuanced studies in Scripture and application to life

STRENGTH (Physical/Practice)

- Moves beyond believing and acting “correctly” to practicing from Christian motives
- Sharing of belief and knowledge occurs in small groups and personal mentoring
- The sharing of God’s grace is natural and obvious in one’s daily life, THE JOURNEY IS NOT COMPLETE, BUT ONLY BEGINNING.

SIMPLE COMPLEX SIMPLE

Needs

Fairfax
CHURCH OF CHRIST

- Worship: ***From Initiator to Imitator***
- You cannot NOT:
 - Love Jesus
 - Love Other
 - Share Jesus
 - Serve Jesus
 - Serve Others
- “Acts of Righteousness” are breath (one MUST breathe in God’s Word, talk with Him unceasingly, etc.) and MUST be shared (Jeremiah 20:9)
- Relationships though:
 - Ongoing mentoring relationships
 - Some relationships have moved from mentoring to apprenticeship
 - Others seek your counsel
 - Others join you in what you are already doing (they want to imitate you because imitate Him)