

MF 4301 SPIRITUAL FORMATION  
June 12-13 and June 26-27, 2009  
Instructor: Dr. Gary A. Chapman  
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**Course Description** The purpose of this course is to introduce students to basic aspects of the history and practice of Christian spiritual formation. Students will learn about a variety of spiritual formation traditions throughout the history of the Church. Students will engage in spiritual formation practices in the context of a covenanted small group.

**Upon successful completion of this course, students will:**

- Be able to identify and be conversant with twelve classical spiritual disciplines.
- Better appreciate the Biblical background for and history of spiritual formation
- Experience the practice of spiritual journaling
- Identify strengths and challenges of their own spiritual journey
- Develop strategies for personal spiritual formation
- Develop strategies for a ministry of spiritual formation in the local congregation, Sunday School class, etc.

**Required Textbook:**

*Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, Richard Foster. Harper Collins, 1978. Third Edition. ISBN: 978-0-06-062839-0

**Course Requirements and Assignments**

Note: Because this is an “intensive” course, students will be required to do reading and journaling prior to the first class session. As well, some assignments will be due at a date beyond the final class session.

1. Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions.
2. Read *Celebration of Discipline*. **Note: Students should have read through page 140 by the first class session on 6/12/09.**
3. As you read each chapter of *Celebration of Discipline*, enter into a “discipline” of journaling. That is, rather than simply summarizing Foster’s major points, interact with and reflect on what you read. (Note: Your journal is private and will not be submitted to the instructor. However, it will become the basis for a reflection paper. You will simply acknowledge in a signed statement your completion of the journal). Some questions to consider as you journal:
  - What insights related to your own spiritual formation did you glean from the chapter?
  - What questions were raised by what you read?
  - From what you read in each chapter, what can you learn for your own spiritual formation?
4. Using insights and implications from your journal, write a 10-12 page reflection paper. This paper will be due no later than July 18, 2009. The paper should be typed, double-spaced and may be transmitted as a computer file. In your paper, respond to the following questions:
  - Share some of the more significant insights from your reading of *Celebration of Discipline*.
  - Describe what you are doing now to further your own spiritual formation. In what ways are you experiencing God now?
  - With regard to your own spiritual formation, in what disciplines do you feel you’re mostly on track? What are you doing in those disciplines to cause you to feel that way?
  - With regard to your own spiritual formation, in what disciplines do you see specific needs and challenges? How will you respond?

- Using the remaining months of 2009 as your “window of opportunity”, what goals and strategies for your own spiritual formation will you put into place? Where do you want to be by the end of the year and how will you get there?
  - In one final section of the paper, please share how your reading will shape your future ministry leadership, whether in a congregation, a Sunday School class, etc.
5. In order to become familiar with some of the classical writings in spiritual formation, students will select and read one of the following books. Based on the reading, write a 2-3 page paper. This paper will be due no later than July 18<sup>th</sup>. The paper should be typed, double-spaced and may be transmitted as a computer file. In your paper, respond to the following questions:
- What new insights related to spiritual formation did you discover in your reading?
  - What practical implications for your own spiritual formation did you discover?
  - What practical implications for your ministry did you discover?

Possible book selections

- *The Imitation of Christ*, Thomas a Kempis
- *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- *The Practice of the Presence of God and The Spiritual Maxims*, Brother Lawrence
- *The Pursuit of God*, A.W. Tozier
- *Spiritual Direction and Meditation*, Thomas Merton

**Grading Scale**

1. Reading of *Celebration of Discipline* (25 points)
2. Personal journal (25 points)
3. 10-12 page Reflection paper (100 points)
4. Active participation in class discussion (100 points)
5. 2-3 page Classical reading paper (50 points)

275-300 points = A  
 250-274 points = B  
 225-249 points = C  
 200-224 points = D

**Course Outline**

- 6/12 am      Spiritual Formation: What It Is and What It Isn't  
 The Inward Disciplines
- Meditation
  - Prayer
- Formation Exercise: Meditation/Prayer. Debriefing to follow during lunch together.
- 6/12 pm      Do We Really Need “Spiritual Formation”?  
 The Inward Disciplines (cont.)
- Fasting
  - Study
- 6/13 am      Spiritual Formation: Biblical or Just More New Age Jargon?  
 The Outward Disciplines
- Simplicity
  - Solitude
- Formation Exercise: Solitude. Debriefing to follow during lunch together.

- 6/13 pm      The Role of "Discipline" in Spiritual Formation  
The Outward Disciplines
- Submission
  - Service
- 6/26 am      The Holy Spirit and Spiritual Formation  
The Corporate Disciplines
- Confession
  - Worship
- Formation Exercise: Confession/Worship. Debriefing to follow during lunch together.
- 6/26 pm      **The Goal and Outcome of Spiritual Formation**  
The Corporate Disciplines (cont.)
- Guidance
  - Celebration
- 6/27 am      **The Ministry's Leader's Personal Spiritual Formation**  
Some "Not So Classical" Disciplines
- The "Discipline" of Evangelism
  - The Discipline of Stewardship
  - The Discipline of Fellowship
  - The Discipline of Journaling -- Debriefing on journaling during lunch together.
- 6/27 pm      Spiritual Formation in the Local Church  
Mentoring/Coaching for Spiritual Formation  
Conclusion