

A Call to Spiritual Formation

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Christian spiritual formation is the process of being shaped by the Spirit into the likeness of Christ, filled with love for God and the world.

God calls us all to become like Jesus. Jesus says, “I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”* We experience this abundance of life – here and now – as our passions, character, understanding, and relationships are increasingly aligned with those of Christ. This lifelong transformation within and among us is the continual gift of God’s Spirit. We are called to be renewed into the likeness of Jesus – but we do not always fully embrace this calling. Sometimes we seem content to be known as “Christians” without intentionally engaging with this work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Other times we desperately long for a new way of life, wanting to grow in our walk with Jesus, but needing help and encouragement. We, therefore, commit to pursue passionately and to receive joyfully God’s grace to be more fully transformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

John 7:37–39
*John 10:10
Romans 8:29
1 Corinthians 11:1
1 Corinthians 15:49
2 Corinthians 3:17–18
2 Corinthians 4:16–18
2 Corinthians 5:16–21
Galatians 4:19
Ephesians 1:3
Ephesians 3:16–19
1 John 3:2
1 John 4:17

As we are rooted in Jesus and in the kingdom he proclaims, we are progressively transformed. Jesus is the center of all life and history, both the source and goal of all creation. God shaped this universe as a place where the love and life of Jesus Christ might flourish. Because we are formed in the divine image, we have the capacity to receive and express this life and love. Although human disobedience corrupts the divine image in us, God still forms a people able to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love their neighbors as themselves. Jesus makes this possible through his life, death, and resurrection. In him we experience a restored relationship of love with God and one another, and continual transformation into his likeness. We are becoming a reconciled and renewed community – which is both the goal and the substance of life in God’s kingdom. This is the good news we proclaim with joy to the whole world.

Genesis 1:26–28
Genesis 3:1–7
Proverbs 8:22–31
Isaiah 42:5–9
Jeremiah 31:33–34
Mark 12:28–34
John 1:1–18
John 13:34–35
Romans 5:9–11
Romans 8:1–11
Romans 8:19–23
Ephesians 2:11–22
Colossians 1:9–23
1 Thessalonians 5:23
1 John 2:7–11

Our engagement with God’s transforming grace is vital. Renewal into the image of Christ is not a human attainment; it is a gift of grace. God mercifully uses all our experiences, including our suffering and trials, to teach and transform us. Even so, transformation requires our involvement and effort. We need to make ourselves available to the Holy Spirit’s work in all our life experiences, particularly through intentional engagement with historical Christian disciplines, including Word and sacrament. These practices open us to the presence and grace of God. As a result, we become, through time and experience, the kind of persons who naturally express love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Matthew 5:43–48
Matthew 11:29–30
Luke 6:40
John 7:38
John 15:5–17
Romans 12:1–2
Galatians 5:16–25
Philippians 2:12–13
Philippians 3:12–16
Titus 2:11–14
Hebrews 5:13–6:1
Hebrews 12:7–13
James 4:7–8
1 Peter 2:2
1 Peter 4:1–2

Spiritual formation happens in community. As we long to know and follow Jesus and be formed into his likeness, we journey with those who share this longing. God is calling the church to be a place of transformation. Here we struggle to fulfill our calling to love. Here we learn to attend to the invitations of God’s Spirit. Here we follow the presence of God in our midst. Spiritual community is the catalyst for our transformation and a sending base for our mission of love to the world.

Matthew 18:20
Luke 6:12–19
John 17:20–26
Acts 2:42–47
Romans 12:4–8
1 Corinthians 12:1–7
Galatians 6:1–2
Ephesians 4:1–16
Hebrews 10:23–25
1 Peter 2:4–10

Spiritual formation is, by its very nature, missional. As we are formed into the likeness of Christ, we increasingly share God’s infinitely tender love for others. We deepen in our compassion for the poor, the broken, and the lost. We ache and pray and labor for others in a new way, a selfless way, a joy-filled way. Our hearts are enlarged toward all people and toward all of creation.

Isaiah 60:1–4
Matthew 5:14–16
Matthew 28:18–20
John 3:16–21
John 20:21–23
2 Corinthians 5:20
Galatians 6:10
1 John 4:7–21

We invite all people, everywhere, to embrace with us this calling to become like Jesus. By God’s grace, we will seek to become lovers: lovers of God, lovers of people, and lovers of all creation. We will immerse ourselves in a lifestyle that is attentive and responsive to the gracious presence of God. We commit ourselves to the community of Christ’s beloved, the church, so that we can learn this way of love together. We entreat you to join us.

Matthew 5:1–10
Matthew 13:44–46
Mark 1:15
Luke 9:23–24
Romans 12:1–2
2 Corinthians 6:1
1 Timothy 6:11–12
Revelation 21:2
Revelation 22:17

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