

Developing As We Grow

6 WEEK JOURNEY

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CB

NAME

SPIRITUAL
FORMATION IS
A PROCESS

OF BEING
FORMED IN THE
IMAGE OF
CHRIST FOR
THE SAKE OF
OTHERS.

ROBERT MULHOLLAND

INTRODUCTION

In his book, *Invitation to a Journey*, Robert Mulholland notes that “Spiritual formation is a process of being formed in the image of Christ for the sake of others.”¹ He notes that our spiritual formation requires a pilgrimage of deepening responsiveness to God’s control of our life and being.

The theme of this spiritual formation journey is *Developing As We Grow*. The theme of this journey plays off the idea that God, who foreknows each person from eternity past (Rom. 8:29), already has a fully developed *photo of a mature me* hanging in heaven’s gallery. However, the extent to which that photo is developed during MY life on earth is dependent on MY responsiveness to His working in MY life.

This journey is six weeks long and provides the opportunity for you to embark on your own *mini-pilgrimage* of spiritual formation. Each of us walks around with some form of brokenness in our lives. However, as the Apostle Paul notes, we are being transformed into the image of Christ, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor. 3:18).

The journey is designed to be conducted in a small group environment, where each week, you will be invited to consider a different topic related to your spiritual *GROWTH*. From the very start of the journey, you will be challenged to allow God’s transformative work to disrupt the normal and comfortable patterns you may find yourself in. Take up that challenge to grow! You will be encouraged that while change is rarely comfortable, being transformed into the image of Christ will always be of most significant benefit to you, and those you interact with daily.

Each week a new topic will be discussed in our small group environment. While the small group provides a means for corporate growth and accountability, everyone will be required to press into God in their personal capacity, as you are:

- Challenged to delve into God’s truths described in Scripture.**
- Encouraged to set aside time for the Holy Spirit to minister to you.**
- Asked to capture your own thoughts and feelings related to the topic.**
- Given the opportunity to establish new patterns of thinking and doing.**

By the end of this journey, we trust that there would have been a shift at a *head*, *heart*, and *hands* level in your life, and that you would:



HEAD: Develop an understanding of the importance that each of the six aspects of spiritual *GROWTH* plays in your continued journey.

HEART: Be convinced that your primary focus in life and your heart’s greatest longing should be a personal relationship with God.

HANDS: Establish new patterns of thinking and doing that will allow you to continue growing spiritually and helping others to grow.

1. Mulholland, M. Robert. “Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation” (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2016), 16.

JOURNEY OVERVIEW

There are many things believers need to know as they grow as a follower of Jesus Christ. However, the six topics included in this journey represent the starting point, and a good foundation, for a person's ongoing spiritual *GROWTH*.

The topics have deliberately been kept simple, each covering three key ideas. The simplicity will allow you to practically apply the insights and principles learned and enable you to share what you have learned with others. The topics are related to the acronym *GROWTH*, and will be covering the following:



CONFIDENCE
CONTROL
CONTENT

I GENUINE FAITH (p5)

Genuine faith is the starting point of your spiritual growth. It represents your confidence in the absolute promises and unchanging character of God.



RELIGION
RELATIONSHIP
RIGHT THINKING

II RELATIONAL INTIMACY (p9)

True relational intimacy with God evidences itself through your unwavering belief that God is entirely, wholeheartedly, and always on your side.



PREFERRED FOCUS
PATH
PRACTICES

III OUR PERSONALITY (p13)

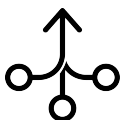
Our personality influences how we approach our spiritual growth. Spiritual wholeness calls for a balanced interplay between your preferred and less preferred ways of being and doing.



YES LORD
YOUR PURPOSE
YIELDING

IV WHOLENESS IN CHRIST (p19)

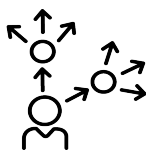
The greatest wholeness a human can ever experience is to be formed in the image of Christ. By yielding to the Holy Spirit, areas of your *unlikeness* to Christ are transformed into His *likeness*.



DILEMMA
DEVOTION
DISCIPLESHIP

V THE CHURCH (p23)

The Church community is the place God has chosen for you to grow spiritually. It is a place where others can be a means of God's grace to you, and you can be an agent of His love to others.



CONVICTION
CONSIDERATION
CHOICE

VI HELPING OTHERS (p27)

Helping others begins with the servant attitude that Jesus showed while on earth. Considering others before yourself is not something that comes naturally; it is an attitude that you develop.

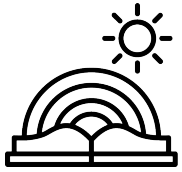
PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Based on the Journey Overview, describe the **ONE THING** that you would most like to have achieve at the end of this journey.

If you had to identify what you think would be the greatest obstacle to you successfully dedicating the necessary time and effort to get the most out of this journey, what would it be? How could you plan to overcome this obstacle?



WEEK 1 : GENUINE FAITH



BIG IDEA:

Genuine faith is the starting point of your spiritual growth. It represents your confidence in the absolute promises and unchanging character of God.

CIRCUMSTANCES CAN MISLEAD

Have you ever misinterpreted an event that occur in your life?

Imagine a father taking their young child to the doctor's room for vaccination. If you had to ask the young child if their father loves them at that moment, the answer would probably be a resounding, "No!" The young child only feels the stinging of the injection in their arm. They experience the trauma of the big needle being plunged into their flesh. How can any of that be a show of love? But years later, when that same child has matured into a parent, they see things very differently with their own children.

Just as a child cannot correctly judge their parent's character by a single trip to the doctor's office, we will not be able to accurately determine God's character by the immediate circumstances of our life.

"Circumstantial faith is fragile because our frame of reference is too small. It is hard for us to look at the significance of events in the context of a lifetime, much less weigh those events on the scale of eternity."

Andy Stanley

(i) Confidence

Genuine faith requires that you have confidence in the character of God and His unwavering plans and promises for you. The circumstances in your life often seek to confuse your faith. When people pray for things, and their prayers seem to fail, they are left thinking that God doesn't answer their prayer, or perhaps that He is angry with them. They conclude that God can't be trusted. However, genuine faith moves past a circumstantial faith and represents wholehearted confidence in God's character, His motives, and the everlasting truth of His Word (Scripture), no matter the outcome.

Read Proverbs 3:5-6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

Is it hard to trust God in every area of your life? Why or why not?

(ii) Control

The issue of control is a critical issue to understand in our lives. Robert Mulholland notes that “the difference between forming ourselves and being formed is the vital issue of control.”² If a person is constantly trying to control their own life, it will be tough for them to yield to God’s control in their lives. In addition to having confidence in God, genuine faith requires that you choose to lay down your own agendas, surrendering your will and desires completely to God’s will and desires. You need to invite the Lord to work out His agenda for you in your life.

Read Jeremiah 29:11-13 – I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

How does knowing the plans God has for you influence your willingness to handing control of your life over to Him? Is there anything hindering you from handing control over to God?

2. Mulholland, M. Robert. “Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation” (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2016), 31.

(iii) Content

Genuine faith is not wishful thinking, nor is it blind faith. Genuine faith is based on the person of Jesus Christ, who the Bible describes as the “author and perfecter of our faith” (Heb. 12:2). The more that we know who Jesus is, what He has accomplished, and what He has promised us, the greater the content we have for our faith. In the Gospel of John, Jesus is described as the Word of God, who became flesh and walked among people on earth (Jh. 1:14). The Word of God provides us with access to the necessary content we need to build our faith. However, the problem with many Christians is that they don’t read the Word of God.

Read Romans 10:17 – So faith comes from hearing ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

If Jesus - in the flesh - were to walk into the room you are in right now, how would your life change? Considering your answer, think of what new meaning you could attach to reading the Bible daily.

WEEK **II** : RELATIONAL INTIMACY



BIG IDEA:

True relational intimacy with God evidences itself through your unwavering belief that God is entirely, wholeheartedly, and always on your side.

MY DEVOTED FATHER

In 1988, there was a devastating earthquake in Armenia. Amidst the rubble of the earthquake, emerge the incredible story of a devoted dad, Samuel, and his son Armand.

Samuel had dropped his son, Armand, at school when an earthquake hit their town. After not getting hold of anyone at the school, Samuel returned to the school only to find the multi-level school building had collapsed. Many people were standing by, but Samuel went to the area where Armand's class had been and began digging in the rubble with his hands. Samuel dug for 10 hours until night set in, often requesting the help of others standing by, to no avail. During the night, temperatures reached -10°C, and yet he continued digging. After 36 hours of digging, with his hands bloodied and tired, and when other parents had already begun bringing flowers to the site to mourn the loss of their children, Samuel broke into the room and found his son and 13 of Armand's classmates.

Rather than running to the embrace of his dad, Armand turned to his classmates and said, "I told you my father would always be there for me."

If an IMPERFECT earthly father could show such devotion to their son, how much more would your PERFECT Heavenly Father show unwavering devotion to you?

"Regardless of how long we've been Christians and how deeply we've studied God's Word, most of us don't really believe down in the marrow of our bones that God is entirely, wholeheartedly, and unwaveringly on our side."

Beth Moore

(i) Religion

There are many different definitions of religion, but religion could be described as a person's specific action or conduct indicating a belief in, obedience to, or reverence for a god, or gods. When considering this description, it becomes clear why many people who claim to be Christians can busy their spiritual lives with activities and conduct, while not having a personal relationship with God. Relational intimacy with God cannot be accomplished by our good works; instead, it comes as a grace gift from God that we receive.

Read Ephesians 2:8-9 – For it is by grace you have been saved ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

Do you tend to feel pressure to serve God in order to earn His favor or approval? Why or why not?

(ii) Relationship

As Hill and Walton so aptly describe, “God’s plan from the beginning was to create a people among whom he could dwell and with whom he could be in relationship.”³ Because our relationship with God is so important, the enemy will do everything possible to hinder us from intimacy. The devil will tell you every type of lie, bring every type of hurt, and present every type of distraction to keep you from developing your relationship with your Heavenly God. God is NOT an authoritarian, angry with humanity. God is NOT a distant deity, unconcerned with human affairs. God is NOT a critical judge, hard to please. He IS a loving, affirming father! A pastor once referred to God as having a *long fuse*, a *short memory*, a *thick skin*, and a *big heart*. As you read the text in Psalms 103, consider how each of these attributes is described in the passage.

Read Psalms 103:2-17 – Bless the Lord, O my soul ...

[Capture some ideas that stand out to you under each of the headings ...]

<i>Long Fuse</i>	<i>Short Memory</i>	<i>Thick Skin</i>	<i>Big Heart</i>

3. Hill, Andrew E., and John H. Walton. “A Survey of the Old Testament. 3rd edition” (Zondervan Academic, 2010), 14.

Write down your experiences of the father-figure in your life, including at least five positive and five negative attributes. How do you think your experiences with your earthly father-figures have impacted your perception of your Heavenly Father?

[Positive]

[Negative]

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

4.

4.

5.

5.

(iii) Right Thinking

When we invite Jesus into our lives, the Bible teaches us that we become an entirely new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). While the Holy Spirit immediately comes to live in us and regenerates our spirits to have relational intimacy with God, it is up to us to renew our minds. Without the renewal of your mind, you will not be able to live a transformed life. Renewing your mind means “losing your old perspective and gaining God’s perspective so that you may think and act like Him” (Stanley, 2001). Learning to see how God sees is the key to experiencing intimacy with God.

Read Romans 12:2 – Do not be conformed to this world ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]



BIG IDEA:

Our personality influences how we approach our spiritual growth. Spiritual wholeness calls for a balanced interplay between your preferred and less preferred ways of being and doing.

REMEMBER “THE DRESS”?

On the 26th February 2015, “the dress” became a viral internet sensation when viewers disagreed over whether the dress pictured was colored black and royal blue, or white and gold.

The phenomenon revealed differences in human color perception. Although the dress color was eventually confirmed as black and blue, the image prompted many discussions and has even been the subject of ongoing scientific investigations into neuroscience and vision science.

In the same way people looking at the same dress saw it differently, our personality preferences can cause us to see the world, and even our spiritual journey, differently to those around us.



(Image: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_dress)

“[As we] look at the role of our preferred ways of being and doing in the world: how we prefer either extraversion or introversion as our focus of life, sensing or intuition as our means of receiving data for living, thinking or feeling as our way of processing the data, and perception or judging as our way of relating to the world ... we will see that spiritual and psychological wholeness calls for a balanced interplay between our preferred and less preferred ways of being and doing.”

Robert Mulholland

(i) Preferred Focus

Scripture tells us that God had a specific design for each of us and that we are fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps. 139:13). You are no accident; you are not a mistake; you are not meant to merely exist here on earth. Your Heavenly Father knows you intimately, and by developing an awareness of how He has designed you, you can begin better engaging with Him and the world around you.

Read Psalms 139:13-16 – You formed my inward parts ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

If you had a real revelation that God knows you and created for purpose, how would that impact your self-talk?

(ii) Path

By completing a personality assessment like the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory, you can find that aspects of your divine design, which you may already be inherently aware of, are given a language that facilitates a greater awareness and appreciation for how God knit you together. Robert Mulholland notes that “our preferred patterns of being and doing deeply shape our individual and corporate spirituality.”⁴ Growing in an understanding of our preferences can help us add spiritual disciplines that we would not ordinarily choose to our spiritual path.

Read Psalms 139:23-24 – Search me, O God ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

4. Mulholland, M. Robert. “Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation” (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2016), 80.

Are there any negative aspects of your behaviour that you have ever blamed on your personality? If you asked God to search you in those areas, what do you think He would say to you?

(iii) Practices

Looking back at your spiritual journey through the lens of your personality preferences will provide you with meaningful insights in terms of how the Lord has guided you to where you currently are. It may also reveal to you why you have avoided certain spiritual disciplines while enjoying others. However, the important learning from understanding your preferences is to develop holistically in your spiritual path. You will be required to implement spiritual disciplines and practices that are not necessarily your preference. Like an athlete preparing for a race, there will be certain exercises they prefer, while others feel like a lot more work; however, are equally important for their preparation and development.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 – Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

Using the list of spiritual disciplines provided, circle which of the spiritual disciplines you regularly practice. Then, indicate which additional three spiritual disciplines you would like to develop, to better prepare you for the race you have been called to run.

Spiritual Disciplines:

Bible reading / Scripture memorization / meditation / private prayer / corporate prayer / worship / praise / thanksgiving / evangelism / acts of service / fasting / moments of reflection / silence / solitude / journaling.



As you conclude this topic, you will be required to complete the following three activities:

1. Click on the link provided and complete the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory (<http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp>).
2. Having identified your MBTI personality profile, refer to Robert Mulholland's tables of *Attitude, Function, or Lifestyle*, and then *Spiritual Paths*. Using the words suggested, identify those attributes which you feel best represent you.
3. Write a paragraph detailing any new insights you have gained from this topic and any areas of your spiritual journey that need developing.

Tables of *Attitude, Function, or Lifestyle* (Mulholland 2016, 77)

Preferred Attitude, Function, or Lifestyle	Extraversion E	Introversion I	Sensing S	Intuition N
Primary Arena	World/Other	Ideas/Self	Body	Spirit
Preference for	Action	Reflection	Sensory reality Details Status quo	Possibilities Patterns Change
Significant Aspects of Reality	Exterior	Interior	Immediacy Concreteness	Anticipation Vision
Windows Through Which God's Revelation Is Received	People Events Scripture Natural world	Individual experience Inspiration Inner world	Society Institutions "The Seen"	Insight Imagination "The Unseen"
Significant Aspects of God	Immanence Creator <i>Imago Dei</i>	Transcendence Identity of God and inner self	Incarnation	Mystery Holy Spirit
Approach to Bible, Religious Experience	Social	Solitary	Practical Literal	Symbolic Metaphorical
Avoids (Hell)	Exclusion Loneliness	Intrusions Confusion	Ambiguity	Restriction Repetition
Seeks (Heaven)	Participation Reunion	Incorporation Fulfillment	Physical harmony Faithfulness Obedience	Aesthetic harmony Mystical union
Prayer	Corporate	Private	Sensuous (eyes, ears, nose, hands, mouth)	Intuitive
Natural Spiritual Path	Action	Reflection	Service	Awareness
Needed for Wholeness	Reflection	Action or Participation	Awareness or Understanding	Service or Embodiment

Preferred Attitude, Function, or Lifestyle	Thinking T	Feeling F	Judgment J	Perception P
Primary Arena	Mind	Heart	Will	Awareness
Preference for	Objective values	Subjective values	Initiative	Response
Significant Aspects of Reality	Theory Principles	Feeling Memory Ideal	Product Categorical	Process Conditional
Windows Through Which God's Revelation Is Received	Reason Speculation	Relationships Emotions	Order "Ought"	Serendipity "Is"
Significant Aspects of God	The Absolute Principle First Cause	Relational Familial (e.g., Father)	Judge Ruler	Redeemer Healer
Approach to Bible, Religious Experience	Analytical Abstract	Personal Immediate	Systematic	Of-the-moment
Avoids (Hell)	Inconsistency Ignorance	Conflict Estrangement	Helplessness Disorder	Regimentation Deadlines
Seeks (Heaven)	Conceptual harmony Enlightenment Justice, Truth	Personal harmony Communion Appreciation	Closure Productivity Work ethic	Openness Receptivity Play ethic
Prayer	Cognitive	Affective	Planned	Unplanned
Natural Spiritual Path	Knowledge	Devotion	Discipline	Spontaneity
Needed for Wholeness	Devotion	Knowledge	Spontaneity	Discipline

Tables of *Spiritual Paths* (Mulholland 2016, 77)

Spiritual Path	Action E	Reflection I	Service S	Awareness N
Some Positive Expressions	Assertiveness Building community	Independence Deepening community	Love Pleasure	Ecstasy Anticipation
Some Negative Expressions	Anger Attack	Fear Withdrawal	Attachment	Elation Depression
Underdevelopment May Lead to	Isolation Lack of circumspection	Emptiness Dependence	Abstraction Overlooking	Flatness
Overdevelopment May Lead to	Impatience Shallowness	Withholding Idiosyncrasy Inappropriate intensity	Idolatry Frivolity Inappropriate conformity	Illusion Impracticality Stubbornness Fickleness
Special Temptations and Vulnerabilities	Distraction Suggestibility	Inaction Inclusion by others	Superstition Suspicion Fear of change	Primitive sensuality Psychogenic illness
Needed for Wholeness	Reflection	Action or Participation	Awareness	Service or Embodiment

Spiritual Path	Knowledge T	Devotion F	Discipline J	Spontaneity P
Some Positive Expressions	Equanimity Objectivity	Compassion Rapport, Trust	Discrimination Competence	Acceptance Serenity
Some Negative Expressions	Apathy Criticalness	Sentimentality Overprotectiveness	Inappropriate control Judging others	Failure to take responsibility
Underdevelopment May Lead to	Confusion	Coldness Distrust	Loss of purpose Indecision	Premature closure, Baseless conclusions
Overdevelopment May Lead to	Reductionism Cynicism Dogmatism Ruminaton	Credulity Personalizing Blaming	Rigidity Perfectionism	Passivity Impulsiveness Procrastination
Special Temptations and Vulnerabilities	Emotional explosion, exploitation, indulgence Contaminated thinking	Idealizing authority Pseudo-objectivity Hurt feelings	Self-righteousness Scrupulosity	Rebelliousness Carelessness
Needed for Wholeness	Devotion	Knowledge	Spontaneity	Discipline

MY MBTI PROFILE IS: _____

Write a paragraph detailing any new insights you have gained from this topic and any areas of your spiritual journey that need developing.

THE INVITATION
IS TO RECEIVE
WHO WE

FUNDAMENT

ALLY ARE AS

THE GIFT IT IS

AND TO

EXPERIENCE

OTHERS AS THE

MEANS OF

GRACE ROBERT MUYHOLLAND **THEY**

ARE.

WEEK **IV**: WHOLENESS IN CHRIST



BIG IDEA:

The greatest wholeness a human can ever experience is to be formed in the image of Christ. By yielding to the Holy Spirit, areas of your *unlikeness* to Christ are transformed into His *likeness*.

DOING NOT JUST KNOWING

Imagine that you were a parent of a thirteen-year-old child. You entered their room and had found it to be an absolute mess. You asked them to tidy their room and were very specific in terms of your instructions. Please pick up all of your clothes off the floor. Place the dirty clothes in the washing bin and those that are clean, fold neatly, and pack into your cupboard. Please tidy your school desk. Please pack your books back onto the bookshelf and make your bed. Finally, please remove your three-day old lunch from your lunch box and take it to the kitchen to wash. As you leave, you say that you will be back in an hour and you would like to see the room tidy. After the hour is up, you return only to find your child lying on their bed, their room in the same state as when you left. When you enquire as to why they haven't done anything, your child responds with an adequate level of shock, "Oh, but I have!" "I have memorized everything that you asked me to. Not only that, but I have even visualized how I would go about doing it and how clean my room will look once it's done."

The story sounds ridiculous, yet, too often, that is how many Christians live out their Christianity. Somehow, we have believed the lie that as long as we know what Jesus taught, we don't actually have to do it.

"Lukewarm people say they love Jesus, and He is, indeed, a part of their lives. But only a part. They give Him a section of their time, their money, and their thoughts, but He isn't allowed to control their lives."

Francis Chan

(i) Yes Lord!

In the Christian community, you will often hear people referring to Jesus as their *Lord* and *Savior*. These two concepts are important in understanding the Gospel message. Jesus, as our *Savior*, provides us with the gift of grace, settles the debt of our sin, restores our relationship with our Father, and redeems the purpose for which we have been created. However, Jesus, as our *Lord*, seems a far less popular idea for Christians to embrace. Lord means master or one who rules. Lordship requires submission and necessitates complete obedience.

Steve Murrell makes an interesting observation when he says, “Lordship is one of the central messages of the Bible. Jesus is referred to as Lord 92 times in the book of Acts and 747 times in the whole New Testament, while being referred to as Savior only twice in Acts and 24 times in the New Testament. The biblical emphasis is overwhelmingly on the concept of Lordship.”⁵

Read James Acts 2:36 – Therefore let all Israel be assured of this ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

Write down how you think your life would look different if you submitted fully to the Lordship of Christ?

(ii) Your Purpose

God’s ultimate purpose for you is to grow in your likeness to Jesus. However, the world sells you the lie that you will only find your purpose through what you do. The truth is that your ultimate purpose is not about doing something, but about being someone. Robert Mulholland notes that we can never be all that God wants us to be as long as areas of unlikeness to the image of Christ exists within us. It is in the areas of our *unlikeness* to Christ that we remain the lord of our lives – areas where our agenda, our will, our desire, our purpose rules.⁶ However, there is hope for us, and that hope is the person of the Holy Spirit. In the areas of your unlikeness to Christ, the Holy Spirit remains present and active, ready to lead you into all truth (Jh. 16:13), and into your true purpose.

Read John 14:16-17 – And I will ask the Father, and he will give another Helper ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

5. Murrell, Steve. "One 2 One: Personal Discipleship Guide" (Every Nations Publications, 2014), 29.

6. Mulholland, M. Robert. "Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation" (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2016), 49.

Take some time to reflect on which areas of your life still have an unlikeness to Christ in them. Write each of the areas down.

(iii) Yielding

Understanding the concepts of saying yes to Christ's lordship and understanding what your ultimate purpose is are crucial to growing into your wholeness in Christ Jesus. However, as necessary, if not more so, is the concept of *yielding*. Robert Mulholland does well when he says, "Spiritual formation is not something that we do to ourselves or for ourselves, but something we allow God to do in us and for us as we yield ourselves to the work of God's transforming grace."⁷

Yield is a great word. It can mean surrendering to someone or something, but it can also mean to provide or produce something. When we yield to the transforming grace of God in our lives, we not only surrender our agenda, desires, and will for that of God, we also allow the Holy Spirit to provide us with His life and produce His fruit in our lives.

Read Galatians 5:16-25 – So I say, walk by the Spirit ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

Ask the Holy Spirit which of His fruit He would want to produce in you, in each of the areas you identified as the areas of your unlikeness to Christ (above question). Write down your response.

WEEK **IV** : FOR ME



Read Romans 8:28-39 and let the Holy Spirit tell you what He will do for you. Make the exercise personal by filling your name on the top of a page and filling in the remainder of the page with the promises God makes you in this portion of Scripture.

My child, _____

I will

I will

I will

I will

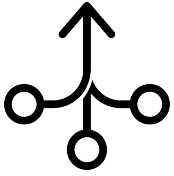
I will

I will

I will

I will

I will



BIG IDEA:

The Church community is the place God has chosen for you to grow spiritually. It is a place where others can be a means of God's grace to you, and you can be an agent of His love to others.

A BRIGHTLY BURNING COAL

Ever heard of Dwight L. Moody? Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899), is described as an “Evangelist and Master Disciple Maker.”⁷ He was only sixty-two years old when he died but had already preached the gospel to over 100 million people.

There is an account of Moody going to visit a man who had expressed interest at one of Moody’s meetings. It was a cold and gloomy day, and Moody was taken into a room with a blazing fire on his arrival. The man began to argue that a person could be a Christian without participating in the life of the church. As he presented his arguments to justify his belief, Moody leaned forward in his chair, took the poker, and proceeded to remove a lump of burning coal from the fire. As the coal lay simmering on the cold stone floor, both men watched as the coal slowly dimmed and went out. After a long pause, the man said, “Mr. Moody, you have made your point.”⁸

The principle of Moody’s illustration lives on as an eternal truth. A person cannot truly be formed in the image of Christ outside of the church any more than a lump of coal can continue to burn brightly outside of the fire.

“Spiritual family is more about making disciples than any other activity or event. Reaching the lost, laying foundations, and teaching them to go and make disciples, is our priority.”

Steve Murrell

(i) Dilemma

One could argue that in the Western world, much of the modern-day church experience has been fashioned around the values of the consumeristic culture we live in. More than ever before, people want to engage in a private Christianity that allows them to pick and choose their spirituality from the menu of convenience. Rather than inconveniencing themselves by opening up their lives to a community of imperfect people, too many Christians seem content to have their spirituality in a *takeaway box*. Robert Mulholland notes that “corporate spirituality is costly” and argues that the “ultimate test of our spirituality lies in the nature of our life in the world with others.”⁸

7. “Profile in Faith: D.L. Moody - Single-Page Full Article | C.S. Lewis Institute.” Accessed October 19, 2020. https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/Profile_DL_Moody_Dorsett_Single-Page_Full_Article

8. Mulholland, M. Robert. “Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation” (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2016), 169, 177, 166.

Read Acts 2:42, 44-46 – They devoted themselves to ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

What are the top ten things you are currently devoted to (your diary and budget may give you some clues)? Now, write down some of the things which Acts 2:42 and 44-46 describe you should be devoted to.

1.

6.

2.

7.

3.

8.

4.

9.

5.

10.

[Book of Acts]

(iii) Yielding

The relationship between discipline and discipleship is essential. Robert Mulholland notes that “Somewhere between the extremes of avoidance of discipline and the imprisonment of discipline is the holistic practice of balanced spiritual disciplines that become a means of God’s grace to shape us in the image of Christ for others.”⁹ Two different mindsets tend to govern one’s spiritual disciplines (e.g. Scripture reading, prayer, fasting, worship etc.). One is the mindset of using your disciplines as a means to earn favor with God. The other is presenting your disciplines as a love offering to God. However, the only pure motive is the motive of loving God through your personal devotions to Him.

As we develop habits of spiritual disciplines, we begin to find our own secret pathways to the heart of God.

9. Mulholland, M. Robert. “Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation” (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2016), 120.

Read Hebrews 11:6 – And without faith it is impossible to please God ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

How are you currently serving others in your local church? What else could you do to better serve others in your local church?

(iii) Discipleship

Bill Hull describes discipleship as “a radical reorientation of our existence.”¹⁰ Discipleship means giving up everything to *follow Jesus*. One of the greatest enemies of discipleship is busyness. Busyness not only distracts us from following Jesus, but it also eats away at the time we have to disciple others. When we plan our schedules, very few of us begin by considering activities that would allow us to be discipled in our faith or disciple others. You must consciously develop margin in your life to attend to the things of God. Without margin in your life, even the best of intentions will get lost in the sea of busyness.¹¹

Read Matthew 4:19-20 – “Come, follow me,” Jesus said ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

The disciples walked away from their fishing nets to follow Jesus. What do you need to walk away from to follow Him wholeheartedly?

10. Hull, Bill. “The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ” (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006), 216.

11. Stanley, Andy, and Stuart Hall. “The Seven Checkpoints: Student Journal. Original ed. Edition” (West Monroe, La: Howard Books, 2001), 181.

WEEK **V**: FOR ME



Read the three statements below and journal some thoughts and feelings related to each. Then, write down some personal commitments related to discipleship.

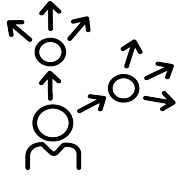
Discipleship begins at home.

Discipleship is simple, but it's not easy; it requires sacrifice.

If we put the Great Commission before the Great Commandment, we turn people into projects.

Write down some personal commitments related to you allowing yourself to be discipled, and you looking to disciple others.

WEEK VI: HELPING OTHERS



BIG IDEA:

Helping others begins with the servant attitude that Jesus showed while on earth. Considering others before yourself is not something that comes naturally; it is an attitude that you develop.

CONSIDERATION AT THE CHECK-OUT

I have a friend who regularly likes to surprise people by showing them uncommon consideration. He often arrives at the check-out point in a supermarket, only to ask the person in front of him if he can pay for their entire shopping bill. He will also see people in a restaurant and approach their waiter in private to pay their bill without them knowing. Sometimes they are friends of his, and other times they are complete strangers.

I have been on the receiving end of some of these types of uncommon acts of consideration. They have always left me feeling overwhelmed with gratitude towards those people who have blessed me and my Father in Heaven.

“As Christians, we have been called to put the needs of others before our own. Too often, however, we end up manipulating others to get what we want ... we lose sight of the truth that God loved us and served us when we were unlovable.”

Andy Stanley

(i) Conviction

Eugene Peterson notes that “if we want to understand God, we must do so on his terms.”¹² One of the best ways of understanding God is to consider the life of Jesus. Everything about the way that Jesus lived seemed contrary to the culture of the day, no more so when He declares that, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” (Mark 10:45).

One of the primary reasons for God calling Christians to connect into community, is to learn how to show devotion to Him by helping others. Time and again in Scripture, we see the example of true believers demonstrating a sacrificial love as they interacted with each other and the world around them, serving as Jesus did.

I have heard sacrificial love described as doing something, for someone else, to put them in a better position than they were, at your expense, expecting nothing in return. It is this personal conviction to love as Jesus loved and to serve as He served, that is the true Christian life.

12. Peterson, H. Eugene. “A Long Obedience in the Same Direction” (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 63.

Read John 13:34-35 – A new command I give to you ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

Is your attitude towards serving others the same as Christ's attitude? Why or why not?

(ii) Consideration

In our world, considering others above yourself is unexpected. By being selfless to help others, you not only surprise them with a blessing; you build a landing strip for the love of God to *touch down* in their lives. When you value others above yourself (Phil. 2:3), you can open their hearts to the love and compassion of God exhibited through your service. By the time of the Last Supper, Jesus had already stooped down low, emptying Himself of His divinity and coming down to earth as a lowly man. However, at the Last Supper, He stooped down even lower, stripping Himself of His outer clothing and washing His disciples' feet. In one of His last acts before His crucifixion, Jesus set the most important example for us to follow.

Read John 13:2-17 – Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

What would happen if you started approaching all of your relationships with the simple question, "How can I serve them?"

(iii) Choice

Because loving other people is on the top of God’s priority list for each of us, we can expect opposition when the opportunity arises to demonstrate God’s love to those who seem undeserving. Every time we are presented with the opportunity to love someone in a way that will really cost us, we will always experience a tug-of-war in our minds.

Andy Stanley has some great advice when making decisions. He suggests that a person ask themselves, ***“In light of my future, what is the wise thing to do?”***¹³

When it comes to developing behaviours that are not natural to you, begin your decision making by considering that you are in the process of being formed in the image of Christ, for the sake of others. In light of that future which belongs to you, what is the wise thing to do?

Read Ephesians 5:15-17 – Be very careful, then, how you live ...

[Capture one idea that stands out to you from this Scripture ...]

In your own words, explain what Paul is encouraging you to do in Ephesians 5:15-17?

13. Stanley, Andy, and Stuart Hall. “The Seven Checkpoints: Student Journal. Original ed. Edition” (West Monroe, La: Howard Books, 2001), 130-138.

WEEK VI : FOR ME



If you had to describe yourself, are you selfish or selfless? Write down your thoughts on this issue together with areas that you would like to change, or new behaviours that you want to develop.

What areas would you like to change?

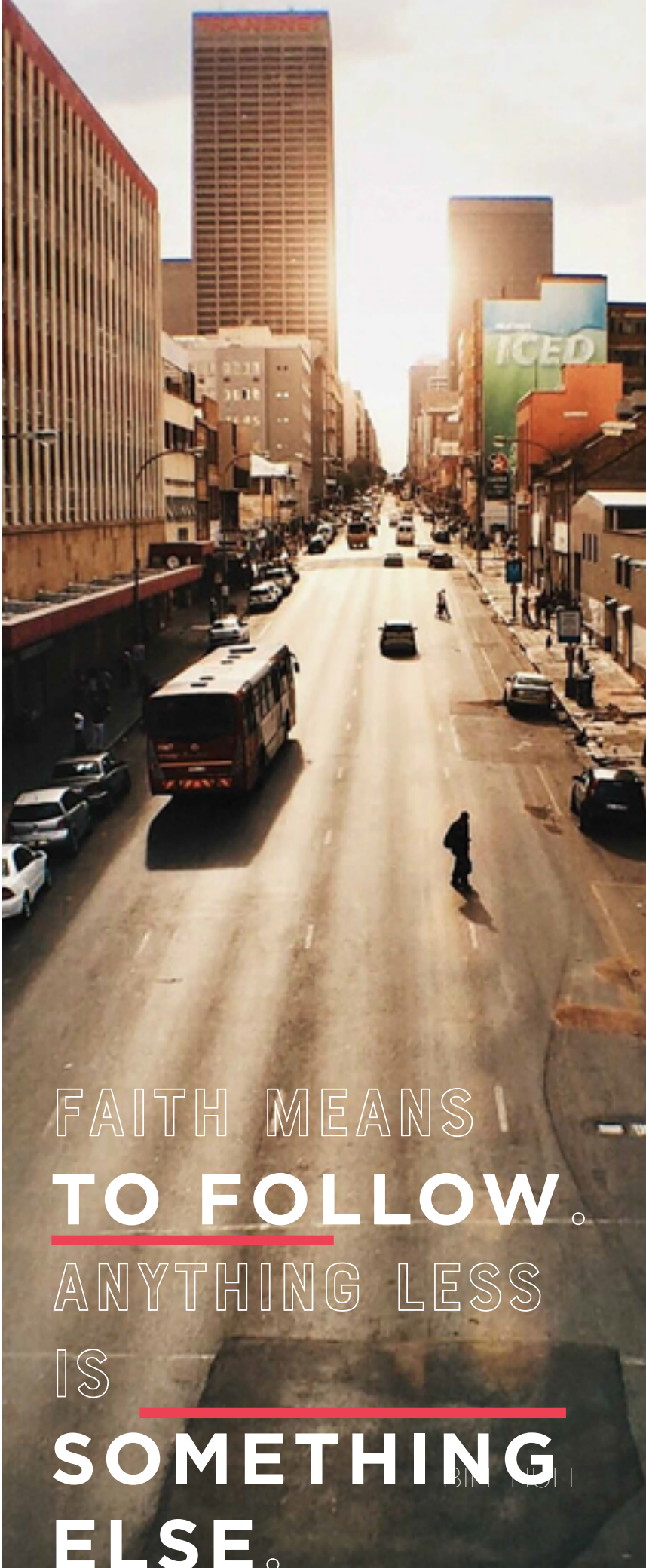
What new behaviours that you want to develop?

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CONGRATULATIONS!

Well done for completing this six-week journey! Take a moment to consider the objective you wanted to achieve when you set out (page 4). Did you achieve it? Why or why not?

As we mentioned upfront, this journey can be a starting point for your ongoing spiritual *GROWTH*. However, Discipleship is never a programme, it has to be a lifestyle! As a final reflection, summarize **ONE easy-to-remember thought** related to each of the six topics we've covered. Write it on the last page and use it as a simple *discipleship reminder* for yourself in the weeks, months, and years to come.



FAITH MEANS
TO FOLLOW.
ANYTHING LESS
IS
SOMETHING
ELSE.

BILL HOLL

1. GENUINE FAITH

2. RELATIONAL INTIMACY

3. OUR PERSONALITY

4. WHOLENESS IN CHRIST

5. THE CHURCH

6. HELPING OTHERS
