

Introduction to Spiritual Formation
Course Syllabus
Charter Oak Church Institute
Spring 2025

Course Description

Christian spiritual formation is the process through which we grow to become more like Christ in all areas of our lives. In this course, we will examine the theological foundations and practical dimensions of Christian spiritual formation. This includes studying the biblical basis for spiritual formation, the practice of spiritual disciplines, how our spiritual formation is affected by our personalities, and the connection between spirituality and emotional health.

Course Objectives

In this course, you will:

1. Understand and articulate a biblical definition for spiritual formation.
2. Learn how to practice specific spiritual disciplines including the daily office and sabbath keeping.
3. Know what kinds of spiritual practices are important to your God-given personality type.
4. Understand the biblical foundation for emotional health and spirituality.
5. Apply spiritual formation to leadership, relationships, and personal discipleship.

Books and Resources

1. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* by M. Robert Mulholland
2. *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: It's Impossible to Be Spiritually Mature, While Remaining Emotionally Immature* by Peter Scazzero.
3. Every attendee will take the free TypeFinder Personality Test before the first-class session at <https://www.truity.com/test/type-finder-personality-test-new>
4. Every attendee should download the Lectio 365 App. For more info, go to <https://www.24-7prayer.com/resource/lectio-365/>

Course Schedule

Week 1 (March 13th)

Topics: Course Introduction; Definition of Spiritual Formation

Reading for *next week*:

- Mulholland: Part 1, The Road Map: The Nature of Spiritual Formation (Ch. 1-4)

Week 2 (March 20th)

Topic: The Key Components of Spiritual Formation

Readings for *next week*:

- Mulholland, Part 2 – The Vehicle: Personality and Piety (Ch. 5-7)
- Complete the TypeFinder Personality Test

Week 3 (March 27th)

Topic: Personality Types and Spiritual Growth

- **Bring your TypeFinder test results to class**

Reading for *next week*:

- Mulholland, Part 3 The Journey: Spiritual Disciplines (Ch. 8-11)

Week 4 (April 3rd)

Topic: Spiritual Disciplines

Reading for *next week*:

- Mulholland, Part 4 – Companions on the Way: Corporate and Social Spirituality (Ch. 12-13)

Week 5 (April 10th)

Topic: Spiritual Formation in Community

Reading for *next week*

- Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, Chapter 1

****No class on April 17th due to Holy Thursday****

Week 6 (April 24th)

Topic: Spiritual Formation and Emotional Health

Reading for *next week*:

- Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* Chapters 2-5

Week 7 (May 1st)

Topic: Opening Ourselves up to God

Reading for *next week*

- Scazzero *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, Chapters 6-8

Week 8 (May 8th)

Topic: Putting it all together.

Journalling Project

For those wanting to deepen their experience of the course* *or* for those taking this course as a part of completing a residency/internship track:

Complete a journal entry in response to each of the following prompts coinciding with each weekly topic of the course. Then schedule a meeting sometime after the course concludes with your supervisor or campus pastor. Using your journal entries as a guide, discuss with them how you feel God is forming you spiritually for the sake of others in either ministry or other forms of leadership.

- After Week 1: When in my past have I experienced significant spiritual growth? What was happening in my life then that may have contributed to that growth?
- After Week 2: Mulholland breaks down “spiritual formation” into a 4-part definition It is *(1) a process (2) of being formed (3) in the image of Christ (4) for the sake of others*. Which part of this definition do I think I will challenge me the most? Why?
- After Week 3: What do I like most about my personality? What do I like least? What parts of my personality do I think need most nurtured?
- After Week 4: What stage of Christian pilgrimage am I in right now? (Awakening, purification, illumination, union). What’s happening in my spiritual life right now that points to one of those stages?
- After Week 5: What relationships in my life do I need to address? How am I fully participating in the body of Christ so that I am both nurtured by it and contribute to it?
- After Week 6: Which “symptoms of emotionally unhealthy spirituality” am I most prone to in my life? Why?
- After Week 7: Have I ever been stuck at “The Wall” in my life with God? What was that Wall like and how did God lead me through it? If I am at a Wall right now, what kinds of emotions and struggles am I carrying?
- After Week 8: What kinds of spiritual disciplines do I need to in my life in order to best grow in Christ and obey his calling in my life right now?

*The journalling assignment is optional unless you are in a residency/internship track in the Institute.