

Practicing the Way – Our Work in Spiritual Formation

Four relevant questions when considering spiritual formation:

- Who am I? – An identity question
- What do I want, and what does God want?
- Where am I going? – A destination question, but not geographical
- How do I get there? – A process question

Philippians 2:1-5 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus...

Philippians 2:12-13

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

1. Our part in spiritual formation is a specific command that requires obedience.

Philippians 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

Spiritual formation is built upon...

- ...Christ's Lordship.
 - Jesus's call to "come follow me," was a call to surrender
 - Romans 10:9 If you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
- ...our identity
 - Since Jesus is Sovereign, we are His subjects.
 - 1 Peter 5:5-7 God is opposed to the proud and gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

2. Our part in spiritual formation is an intentional labor that requires commitment.

Philippians 2:12-13 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

- "work" = carry out to its completion or to the goal.
- Carry your salvation to its ultimate conclusion – Christlikeness.
- The work of spiritual formation is ongoing.
 - It's a present tense verb – keep on working out your salvation.

- But its passive, so God is actually the one doing the work.
 - **Our role in the work of spiritual formation is to place ourselves an environment to be formed.**
 - Bible intake, Christian community, ongoing communication with God through prayer, solitude, worship, service, and giving.
 - **God does the work of spiritual formation in response to our willingness to be formed.**
- 3. Our part in spiritual formation is a proper reaction to God that requires humility and openness.**
- Philippians 2:12 “...work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”
- Keep putting yourself in a place where God will carry out His objective of making you like His Son and keep on responding to his work in your life, but do so with an understanding of who He is.
 - **We recognize that God is our Sovereign Creator who is worthy of...**
 - **...our love, surrender, and obedience.**
 - John 14:15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”
 - Psalm 1:1-3 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.
 - **...our respect and reverence.**