

SF 2.2.1 – Spiritual Journey Discovery

INTRODUCTION – Christian Discipleship is a journey with God where we as individuals and communities of faith are progressively being transformed into the image and representation of our Lord. Though we will not attain or complete our journey in this life on Fallen earth, it will be completed in “Perfected Eternity.”

It is useful for us to map out our journey progress as an encouragement to continue cooperating with the Spirit in this transformational life, and as a reminder of where we started and how far we have come... not to mention how far we have yet to go. In preparation for our map of our faith journey, it may be helpful to create some common ground in how we conceptualize and come to understand the Spiritual Life we are engaged in:

A) CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF THE DIMENSIONS OF FAITH AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING – There are distinct ways in which humanity now processes reality:

1. **Two Dimensional** – this is most easily seen as the dualities of “either/or” distinctions as between “black and white” or “good and bad.” The Apostle John is known for this dualistic view of reality.
 - a. It is the most simplistic way of seeing things, but there is danger here in setting up things that must be one thing or another [false dichotomies] as life is rarely an either/or proposition.
 - b. All of humanity lives in a world among the “shades of grey” where light and dark or good and bad are the ideals most easily identified, but the shades of grey between them become the more challenging view life. Along these lines C.S. Lewis would argue that “the good is the enemy of the best” - meaning it is relatively simple to discern good from bad, but it takes spiritual insight to determine good from better or better from best.
2. **Three Dimensional** – This is really where most of us live in the width, height, and depth view of life where we find a relative place of Spiritual growth and maturity within a time frame in history.
 - a. It is where we live in the three dimensional realm of “good-better-best” and/or “past-present-future.” Where the two dimensional view approaches the Spirit life as “either/or” - the three dimensional view views the Spirit life as “both/and.”
 - b. In this view there is no necessary conflict in being spirit [Imago Dei] and flesh [material world creation]... flesh-soul-spirit are seen as a holistic unity as God made us.
 - c. The challenge in this view is to find our place in it while holding to grace-hope-love. In the 60’s and 70’s Bill Gothard taught his “Basic Youth Conflicts” seminars, where he likened people who take control of their own lives to diamonds being purposefully chipped by the individual. He reasoned that God has a goal of perfection for each person [true enough], but human sin and disobedience damage it [also true enough]. While conceptually I would agree that our attempts of controlling our life may diminish us, this fails to correctly understand the greatness of God and the wonder of Grace that can heal and transform people now.
 - d. God’s standard of perfection in Jesus and the place of revelation of perfection is in eternity. Though we may damage our self on Fallen earth, in eternity perfection will be the norm... we will be seen as God had always intended us to be.

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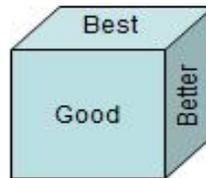
- e. Thus, one may argue that while humanity is both “a sinner saved by Grace” and a “saint who sometimes sins,” the “and” of this argument says that God sees us not as we are now in our imperfect state, but as we will be in heaven in our perfected state.
3. Four Dimensional – this view adds the component of being outside of time in eternity.
- a. Though we each now have a past, present and future in our life on earth, in eternity we join God in an “eternal present” where time will have a relative significance. In our Fallen state we do not now live in this realm, but God does and has a much more expansive view of reality.
 - b. Death was a consequence of the Fall, and it is an aspect of God’s Grace that He didn’t force us to live forever in our Fallen condition. In eternity we will be the perfect reflection of Jesus God created us to be... the creation He always intended us to be.
4. Five Dimensional – this view adds the dimension of multiple realities overlapping in eternity.
- a. Though humanity can only conceptualize such a thing, it is most likely that God exists beyond the bounds of reality as we know it.
 - b. It is also probable that physics as we now know it will be rewritten in terms of perfection in the new heaven-earth in eternity. The things which we now know as impossible may not only become probable but also the norm... the ongoing discovery there will be a joy!

Dimensions of Faith/Spiritual Understanding

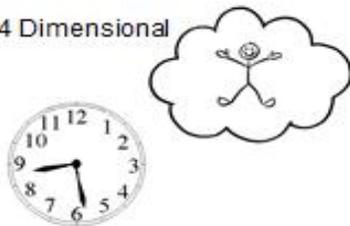
2 Dimensional



3 Dimensional



4 Dimensional



5 Dimensional



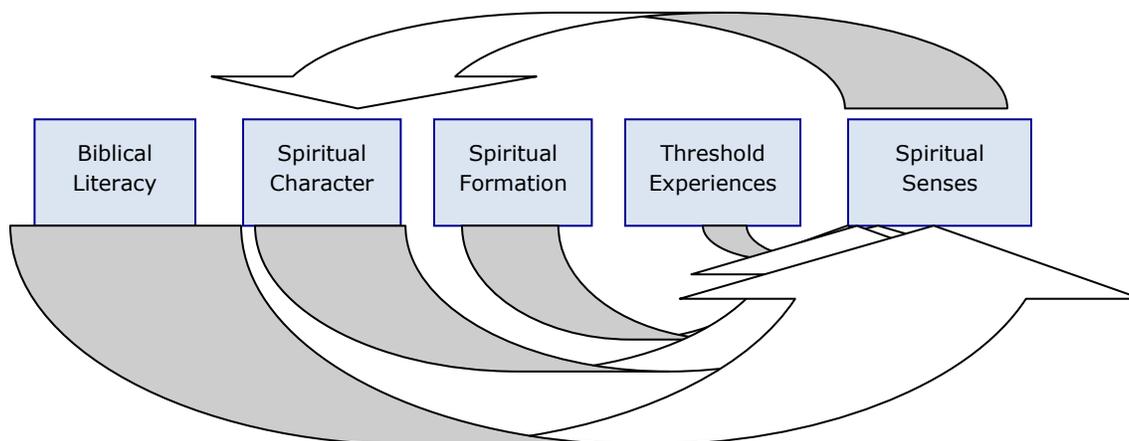
5. Thus – Imagine these means of perception combined with God operating in each perceptive realm perfectly and simultaneously expressing all His attributes all the time! The new reality of the redeemed material world physics had its opening salvo in Jesus’ resurrection, and evidenced also by Jesus physicality and His ability to appear spontaneously where He chose (John 20:19). This clearly

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suggests a new manner of physics we now do not understand. The result of such contemplation is a more expansive view of the Greatness of God and a heightened sense of wonder, which we desperately need in an age of unreasonable faith.

B) SPIRITUAL PERCEPTIONS – these are the perceptual organs through which we engage and process the Spirit or non-material world. Though the Fall has truncated the natural perceptions of the Spirit realm so that now we “see a poor reflection as in a darkened mirror, but in eternity we shall see clearly face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known” (1 Cor 13:12). Yet even in our Fallen state, something still remains of our Spiritual receptors, and God has supplemented the Spirit to allow us to interact with Him. Though these are much less understood, there are five spiritual perceptions in which we interface with the spiritual world. Our Christian Spiritual identity is formed in Christ through the Spirit, and it includes the places in the ‘innerman’ where the Spirit shapes our identity in Christ as well as by the choices we make. The five Spiritual perceptions are forgiveness, identity, eternity, wonder, and presence. These Spiritual perceptions are the result of the inner transformation of the Spirit – where our spiritual character is fed by two components: 1) quantitative responses [“works” such as moral obedience] as well as 2) qualitative transformation [“Christian character” such as love and desire]. The former alone may often lead to legalism, but when coupled with the later they lead to Spiritual maturity.

Biblical literacy, spiritual formation, and threshold experiences all feed into and shape our spiritual senses... which then feeds back and shapes our spiritual character. Spiritual Character is where the fruit of the Spirit takes shape as our nature and character are increasingly conformed into that of Jesus’.



1. **Biblical Literacy** – this involves both the cognitive process of study and learning God’s Word, as well as the relational process where the Scripture masters the disciple and a greater desire for knowing and loving God is ignited under the guidance of the Spirit. Scripture provides the Spiritual medium where conviction, remorse, repentance, restoration, and reconciliation occur, and where personal transformation results.
2. **Spiritual Character** – this involves Jesus’ nature being formed within the disciple where we increasingly reflect our Lord Jesus [Imago Christi]. We remain uniquely individual as God’s creation

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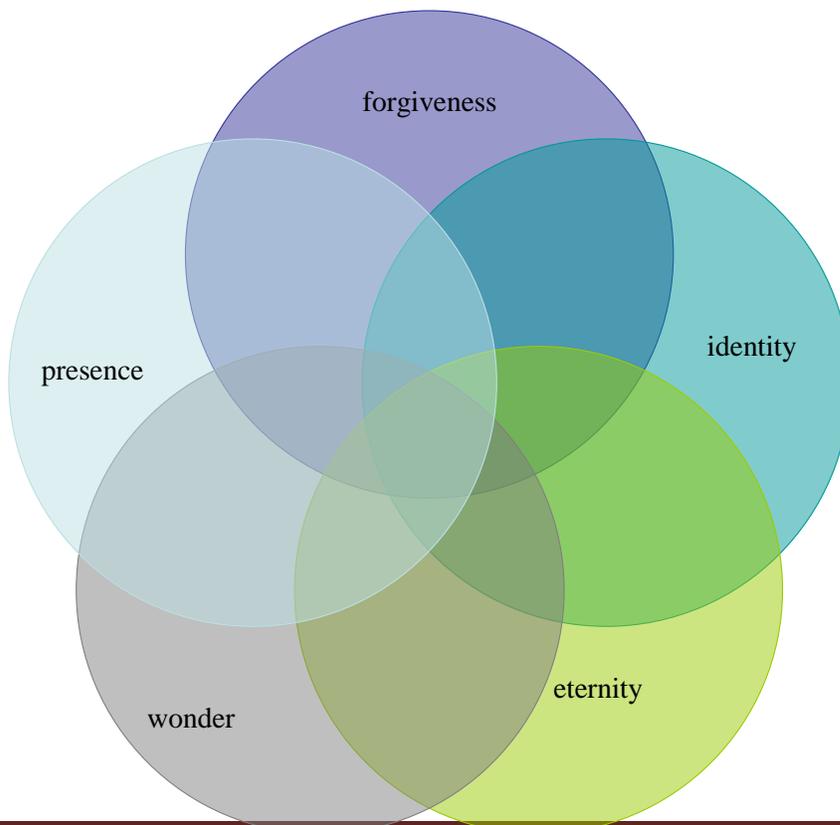
[Imago Dei] where our own personality remains, but we also become increasingly reflective of Jesus' nature and character in the "inner-man" as Paul calls it or perhaps more appropriately the "inner-person" – this transformation is the heart of Spiritual formation.

3. **Spiritual Formation** – this involves a wide variety of spiritual formation practices where we consciously engage God, where we purposefully restrain our own natural impulses, and intentionally cooperate with the Spirit who delights in performing inner-transformation.
4. **Threshold Experiences** – are those experiences where we recognize God has intervened in our life and we are changed by the experience. Some of these will be major trajectory changes where our life purposefully heads off in another direction at the intervention of the Spirit. Most often we will experience nudges and sometimes pushes where God redirects and refocuses us. These are often observable in the "rear-view mirror" of our Spiritual development as we look back and see choices we've made, forks in the road we have taken, and Grace revealed.
5. **Spiritual Senses** – are roughly equivalent to the five senses through which we interpret the material world. Unlike the previous four perceptions and the five material world senses, spiritual senses are much more subjective... but these five senses of the "Spiritual sense palate" are the natural outworking of God's Spirit. These senses comprise who we are in the inner-person, and they are what shapes our worship and all ministry. The five senses comprise:
 - a. **A Sense of Forgiveness** – this derives from our understanding of our own need and the magnitude of the forgiveness we've been provided in Christ Jesus [see Spiritual Formation/Spiritual Disciplines 1.13 - Forgiveness Study and Practicum].
 - i. 2 Pet 1:9; 1 Tim 1:15-16; 1 Cor 1:8-10; Eph 2:8-10
 - ii. A growing awareness of my having been forgiven and the sufficiency of Grace.
 - iii. It is knowing how broken and fallen I really am... and understanding the Spiritual balance God provided with grace and mercy.
 - b. **A Sense of Identity** – this derives from how we see our self as a child of God and disciple of Jesus... this is true "Christocentric Faith" or in other words it is true Christianity not "churchianity":
 - i. 1 John 3:1; 1 Pet 2:5-11
 - ii. This is understanding who we really are in Christ.
 - iii. It is knowing how God sees us as the son/daughter He loves, not how we see ourselves. This involves our moving from the "sinner saved by grace" of the new born experience, to the "saint who sometimes sins" of spiritual maturity.
 - c. **A Sense of Eternity** – this derives from knowing there is more to life than the obvious here and now, and that our true home is with God in eternity... it is Kingdom of God mindedness, rather than worldly mindedness:
 - i. 2 Cor 4:16-18; Rom 8:18-26; 2 Kings 6:15-17; Col 3:1-4; 1 Pet 3:10-12
 - ii. A growing awareness that something bigger is going on that I am caught up into and am made a part of. It is finding our role in the advancement of the Kingdom of God

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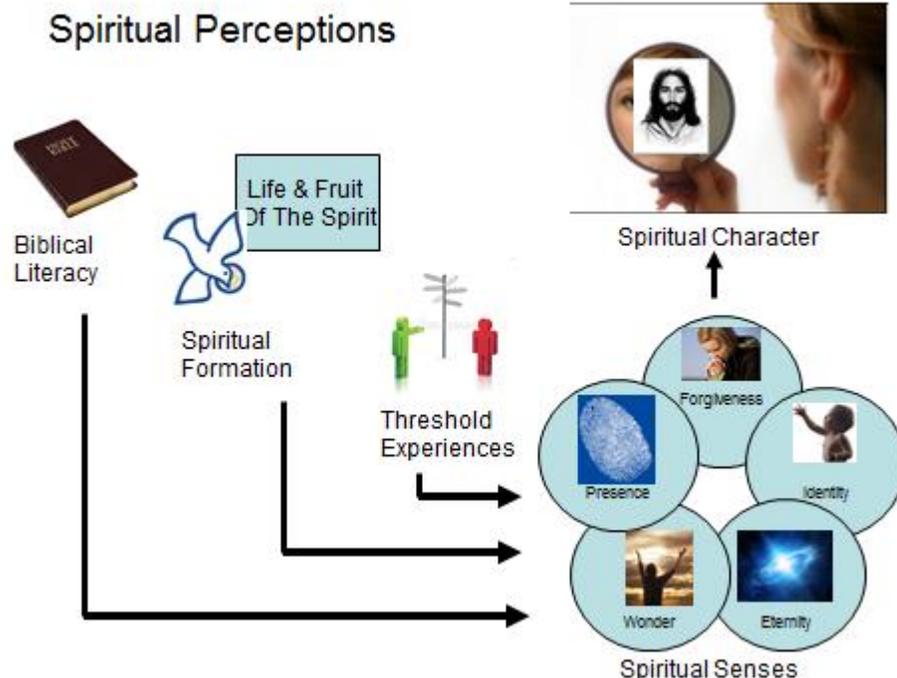
and being a willing participant with the Spirit.

- iii. It is seeing the spiritual reality behind the physical event.
- d. **A Sense of Wonder** – this derives from being caught up in God in the cosmic wonder of the Kingdom of God... it is getting caught up and pressing into the “supernatural world” rather than remaining content in the “natural world.” It is the delight of understanding God’s invitation to travel with Him “further up and further in”:
 - i. Gal 4:15; Phil 2:12-15, 4:4-7; 1 Pet 1:8-12; Eph 1:18-19; Job 42:1-6
 - ii. Recognizing that God is more wondrous and amazing and He is beyond all explanation.
 - iii. His revelation is such a small part of all He is... but it is enough to capture our mind/heart and enchantment.
- e. **A Sense of Presence** – this derives from recognizing God’s finger prints through all aspects of our life... of being and becoming more aware that God is everywhere and in everything and the delight of encountering Him in the simple walk of life:
 - i. 1 Chron 12:32a; Phil 1:21-24; 1 Pet 4:7-11
 - ii. It is the spiritual equivalent of GPS – it is understanding the role God has given me to play in this body of believers.
 - iii. Eph 4:3-7 – being renewed and transformed continually.
- f. These senses are distinct but interrelated - the diagram below provides a visual depiction of this dynamic:



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6. The first four perceptions are actually the more objective elements of this group because they can be somewhat more defined, qualified, quantified and measured.
7. The fifth perception of the “five Spiritual Senses” is the most subjective element – though it may be qualified, being spiritual in nature it is pretty much beyond measurement... and unfortunately for this reason it is so often overlooked, ignored, or mistrusted by Christian leadership.
 - a. Spiritual senses are the transformational component that drives spiritual formation and the development of spiritual character which consequently loops back and forms the other four perceptions... the more objective elements.
 - b. If the spiritual senses do not develop in spiritual formation and spiritual character, you are unfortunately left with legalism – both moral and ethical... where no transformation occurs... Eph 4:22-24 [23 is key]. Gal 3 & 5 – freedom in the Grace of Christ.



8. All five spiritual perceptions have to do with developing spiritual maturity:
 - a. The result of spiritual maturity is a peaceful, joyful person - the first test is our awareness of how we act among others especially non-believers. Do they want to be with us? Is there a convicting aspect of our presence where people see something different in us? Is our presence balanced with Grace, Hope, Love, and Joy? These gifts of the indwelling Spirit need to be explored, appropriated, and implemented.
 - b. A spiritually mature person tends to be a polarizing factor -
 - i. On one hand they are attractational... people see the fruit of a spiritually mature life and are both attracted to it and challenged by it as positive Godly characteristics are

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formed and displayed. The transformational life of God radiates out and engages others.

- ii. On the other hand they are convicting... those who refuse to submit to God will find these spiritually mature people an irritant. The transformational life of God is often the brunt and front-line of spiritual warfare.
 - c. If legalism reigns instead of spiritual life – you are working in your own strength... this is not transformational life.
 - d. Ministry based on legalistic knowledge has a shelf life of 3-5 years... by then you have run the course of dispensing information. Information download is not transformational... because it is not relational or spiritual.
9. Spirit and Truth are key... we need both - “But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:23-24)
- a. Most people try to go with knowledge and skills to form spiritual maturity... these bypass change in the innerman that births spiritual character... this leads to a Pharisaical life which Jesus condemned.
 - b. Head and heart need to be fused... with the work of the Spirit yielding transformational life... this is anti-Pharisaical.
 - c. Mere knowledge is not enough - “You believe that God is one. You do well; [but even] the demons also believe, and shudder.” (James 2:19)
 - d. Personal relationship with God is born through individual brokenness and humility resulting in my desperate need of Grace.
 - e. Most people don’t know how desperate they really are. You hear people say all the time - “but I’m a good person.” Our unredeemed “goodness” is but “filthy rags” to God... ^{Isa 64:6} All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.
 - f. This is not demeaning humanity, rather it is reclaiming the high calling and nature of what it is to be made in the image of God [Imago Dei] and reflecting the nature of Jesus in our redeemed hearts and lives [Imago Christi].
10. Discovery overview:
- a. To help define the purpose of your journey with God.
 - b. To identify the call to a deeper relationship that God has put on your heart.
 - c. To discover where we are now in our journey with God.
 - d. To help clarify how we can cooperate with God more intentionally in your journey of living in love with God.
 - e. Spiritual Formation is:

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- i. The process that takes place in a disciple of Jesus as the life of the Spirit transforms us through deepening intimacy with God, changing us from the inside out into the likeness of our Lord Jesus.
 - ii. A partnership that involves the disciple's intentional response to God in submission and adoration in encouraging the transformational process. The goal being a living reflection of God's Glory and Love.
 - iii. The result of God's reformative transformational work in every disciple.
11. God's Calling - operates on two levels:
- a. First Order Call – the Great Commandment... the invitation to live in a relationship of loving intimacy with God, it is first and foremost life in the Spirit.
 - b. Second Order Call – the Great Commission... the invitation to partner with God in His service to the world using our spiritual gifts for His glory. The second order call flows out of the first order call as God's love powers us.
12. The Discovery Process - there are many ways of conceptualizing this, for our purposes we will employ the following:
- a. Spiritual Timeline - where have you been?
 - b. Spiritual Journey - where are you going?
 - c. Longing and Calling - where are you now?
 - d. Action Plan - becoming intentional about how you will get there?

C) MAPPING OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY – there are several ways to map one's Spiritual Journey... we will employ two. The first one is a linear graph where you identify "Spiritual threshold and other formative events" in retrospect, and place an impact value of 1-10. The second is a chart that incorporates the positive and negative influences of your life within the greater context of your personal spiritual map.

1. TIMELINE CONSIDERATIONS:

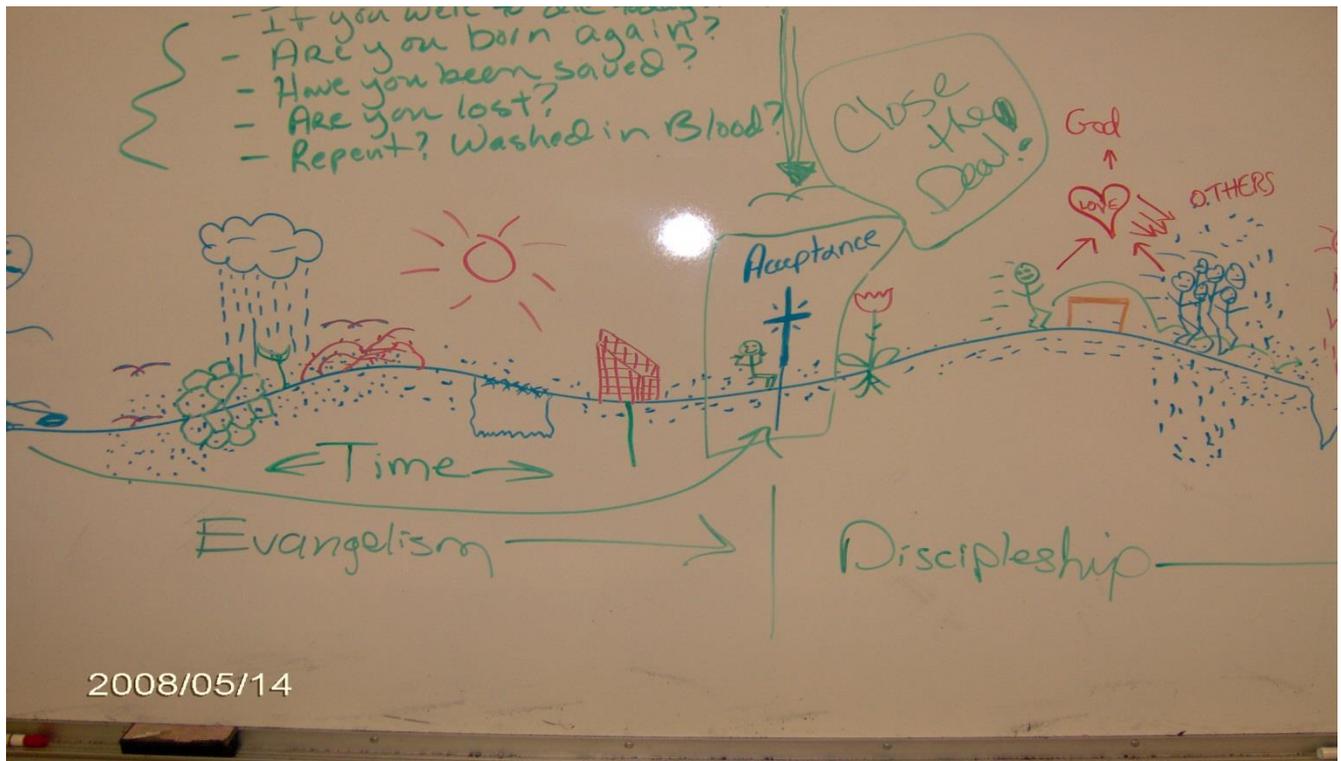
- a. Life Rhythms – range between a garden and a desert:
 - i. In the Garden we behold God's Holiness.
 - ii. In the Desert we behold our Fallen state, and discover God's love and comfort.
 - iii. Experiencing both we learn Spiritual longing, dependence, and humility.
 - iv. In preparation ask God to reveal your life rhythms now and in the past.
- b. Woundings – are the places where the Spirit longs to work in our personal transformation:
 - i. Some woundings are obvious, others are subtle or even hidden... in listening to God we open ourselves to discovering and identifying woundings.
 - ii. Realize that desolation, isolation, brokenness, weakness, pain and suffering all lead to confession and dependence that drives us closer to God.
 - iii. In preparation ask God to reveal where your woundings are keeping you from a closer and more vital walk with Him.
- c. The Enemy's Strategy – Is always "deception, accusation and distraction":

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- i. What lies are you hearing? They always emerge in the space where God’s revelation of His love and acceptance of us is being undermined by our fears, failures, and disbelief. Consider anew God’s great love for you.
 - ii. Note anything that is geared to turning us away from God.
 - iii. Note places of inappropriate responsibility where accusation thrives.
 - iv. Note temptations where distraction thrives.
 - d. Spiritual Warfare – often plays out through the battlefield of our woundings.
 - i. Spiritual warfare has 2 components:
 1. Holding untrue or insufficient perceptions of God.
 2. Holding untrue or insufficient perceptions of yourself as God’s beloved.
 - ii. Submit to God, resist the Devil – James 4:7-8.
 - iii. You have an adversary who wants to destroy you – 1 Peter 5:8.
 - e. Spiritual Formation insights:
 - i. Note where you tend to meet with God... and the things that lead you away from Him.
 - ii. How you connect with God... and key people God uses to promote growth.
 - iii. When you feel closest to God... and characteristics of your relationship.
 - iv. When you feel distant from God... and discover key strategies of growth God is using.
2. **STAGE 1 - LINNEAR TIME-LINE MAP** - This stage focuses upon the development of your Spiritual awareness and involves both positive and negative experiences that have helped to form your cumulative spiritual identity.
 - a. Start with thinking about your earliest awareness of spiritual life and progress to the present.
 - i. Use a short title or phrase that will jog your memory for each spiritual encounter.
 - ii. Start with the major threshold influences and fill in with other significant experiences.
 - iii. These might include discussions with key people, or movies you saw that made an impact, or books you read, etc.
 - b. Spiritual Journey Graph:
 - i. Draw an X-Y axis gradient with the X line being years and the Y line a 1-10 scale of spiritual influence.
 - ii. Place a 1-10 rating with 10 bringing you closest to God, and 1 the least close to God.
 - iii. Don’t try to list every encounter, and don’t get bogged down over describing it or its influence... it is enough that you know what it means.
 - iv. Each map should have a number of “sign posts” common with all believers:
 1. Dawning awareness of God.
 2. Influential encounters and key people... both positive and negative.
 3. Understanding of Jesus as Savior.
 4. Conviction of Jesus as Lord.
 5. Blessings and woundings.

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6. Mountain top experiences.
 7. Valley experiences.
 8. Break through experiences.
 9. Callings, challenges, failures, triumphs, belief & doubts.
- v. This is your own working tool... you will not be asked to share it with anyone. Feel free to be honest and vulnerable... this is between you and God.
- c. Spiritual Journey Pictorial Diagram:
- i. For those who are more visual the following approach may be more helpful than the graph approach.
 - ii. Using the same markers listed in the graph, you may apply them diagrammatically.
 - iii. The following picture is an example of such an approach... make sure to personalize it and make it your own. This exercise is all about your walk with God.



3. **STAGE 2 - SPIRITUAL JOURNEY CHART** - understanding where I have been... these should be more major events, again don't get bogged down in minutia. This stage focuses on your emotional responses to your life development. The 1st stage sets the stage, and this rounds out the picture.
- a. Step 1 – On small 2"x1.5" post-it stickers write the following:
 - i. Positive blessings or good events and approximate date on yellow stickies.
 - ii. Negative or painful events and approximate date on pink stickies.

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- iii. Include any significant person or event that was important in the development of your relationship with God... include those that drew you closer to or away from God.
- b. **Step 2 – Beginning on the left going from top to bottom order your notes in accordance with your time line. Leave room for one sticky at top, and two at bottom.**
 - i. Notice if any themes or recurring concepts run in your ordering.
 - ii. Don't force thematic development, rather observe the details and allow a flow of development to unfold.
 - iii. Remember the idea here is to see the past in the rear-view mirror to observe what God has been doing in your life.
 - iv. God wastes nothing in our personal spiritual development. A prayerful and careful observation will help us see what God has been up to... once we catch up with what He's doing, we can begin to dream about where He's taking us and what He has uniquely prepared us for.
- c. **Step 3 – Add theme or chapter headings at the top of each column on blue stickies:**
 - i. If you were going to name the column as a chapter heading to describe that particular period of your life, how would you name it? Think of this in terms of a newspaper article headline... it should capture the event in brief terms. Don't try to go into description... it's enough that it captures your remembrance.
 - ii. Regroup your stickies as needed under your approximate time line.
 - iii. Chapter headings may be titled "early growth," "bumbling and stumbling," "new horizons," "testing's," "wonder and growth," "focusing," etc... whatever makes sense to you.
 - iv. Threshold events are key in this chart, with significant events either challenging or supporting them.
- d. **Step 4 – On a purple sticky near the bottom (leave room for one more sticky at the very bottom) – write a spiritual insight you discovered about yourself as you rummage through these chapter experiences. This should be an insight of how you are developing as a spiritual being.**
- e. **Step 5 – Finally on a blue sticky at the very bottom, write a summary statement about your changing view of God.**
 - i. Through each of these seasons of our life in development we will learn something new about ourselves and about God.
 - ii. Remember that God wants to be found, and He is actively engaging us even when we are not aware of it. This rear-view observation will help enable you to notice this.
 - iii. Prayerfully consider each chapter and observe if something new about God been revealed to you.
- f. **Step 6 – record on a separate sheet of paper 5 to 10 insights you note as you are assembling your story line.**

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- i. These insights should capture some key observations of spiritual development in your spiritual life development.
- ii. Prayerfully ask the Spirit to reveal what has been going on. Don't force it... if you don't see it wait until God starts to reveal it. These components will emerge as you seek God's guidance.
- g. The following is a picture of a time-line chart – the top line blue sticky are the “chapter headings”, the yellow and pink stickies are the positive and negative experiences, the purple sticky at the bottom is what I learned about myself in each chapter, the bottom blue sticky is my changing view of God in each chapter:



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h. Remember that each of us will have our own journey, but with careful observation we can observe God's Footprints through our life.

4. **STAGE 3 - DISCOVERY ENCOUNTER** - Spend some time in prayer and seeking God. Encourage Him to be free to open your mind or heart to whatever He may be desiring to address with you. Now that you've completed your map and chart, did you discover anything interesting? Maybe something you overlooked, or something God has been encouraging you about, or trying to get your attention about, or?? Talk to Him about this. On a separate sheet of paper write your thoughts in quick note form while it is fresh in your mind and heart.

a. **WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?** Now that you have mapped and charted your spiritual journey, the fun part is to ask God to reveal to you His heart for your life. Here are some probing questions to prayerfully ponder... don't force it, let the Spirit move you. On a separate sheet make notes about what God is moving in you. As you consider your story...

- i. Who are you? What is God trying to teach you about yourself?
- ii. How have you seen yourself image change over the years?
- iii. How does God reveal to you who you really are?
- iv. Is there an unfinished challenge you need to address?
- v. Is God speaking words of love and encouragement that you have missed or ignored?
- vi. Ask God for a breakthrough... for a discovery of His calling and purpose for you in this season of your life. What is the Spirit whispering?
- vii. Ask God to reveal anything that may be holding you back from your growth in God. Is there a lie you are hearing?
- viii. What is the nature of the lie? Typically it will involve your perception of God's identity as your Father and/or your perception of your own identity as God's Beloved.
- ix. Is there something you are having trouble believing as you ponder this?
- x. Are there wounds that remain fresh that should have healed? Why do they remain fresh?
- xi. Pour you heart out to God and genuinely seek His leading and counsel... whatever it means. What promptings do you hear?

b. **WHERE AM I GOING?** Identifying the longing of your heart. Ponder the questions in parts i and ii below and ask God to open your heart and mind. Don't worry about writing things down here, just allow your mind and heart to conceptualize some thoughts. Then write out your ideas in the form of iii – longing statements, and iv – longing prayer:

- i. Clarifying the longing of our heart is a difficult but wonderful undertaking... we hear so much clamoring from our minds and bodies, also from our family, friends and others whose thoughts and desires cloud what our heart really yearns for.

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1. What is the “longing of your heart?” Given your unique spiritual values, the way God has created you and is transforming you... understand that your longing flows from the story and ideals of your spiritual journey.
 2. Longing ignites passion – It motivates you and it captures you. Is there a calling or a future that God is asking you to consider moving into?
 3. If you could do anything, if you were given the freedom of time and money and responsibility where you could pursue your hearts fondest desire... what might that be?
 4. What are some of the key elements of what you long for in your relationship with God? What might God be nudging you toward?
- ii. Longing Contemplation Sequester Questions – hopefully the foregoing materials have sharpened your mind and softened your heart. Are you ready to believe that God not only loves you completely, that He has wondrously formed you physically, mentally, and spiritually... that He has the desire that you partner with Him in advancing the Kingdom of God on earth. Note some key words that God has brought to you... what do these mean in context with your longing?
1. I experience the greatest joy and peace when...?
 2. When I think about getting close to God, I ...?
 3. The spiritual qualities I most admire and desire for God to shape my life are...?
 4. The aspects of my personality that tend to block relationships with God and others are ...?
 5. The person [other than Jesus] that I believe is having [has had] the greatest impact on my spiritual relationship with God is...?
 6. Now that I have completed an assessment of my spiritual timeline-chart-story line, what does it reveal about my calling? What does it reveal about who I am seem to be often called upon by God to be...?
 7. When I hear other people talk about their relationship with God, I often think about...?
- iii. My Longing Statement – based upon the way God has shaped me... what kind of relationship do you sense God is calling you into for His pleasure and for yours?
1. God is constantly “inviting” us into different ways of encounter and service. Contrary to common thinking, these are not onerous or punitive, but rather ways we can express our experience and relationship with God. “Inviting” is another more accurate word for “calling” that is commonly used in Christian circles.
 2. Spend some time in prayer... asking God to reveal to you a fresh expression of His calling to you. Don’t force it, wait for God to open the door of your mind and imagination. This may take some time... the first time I had such an

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experience took 45 minutes before I started to sense what God was saying to me.

3. Write 6 to 12 short statements about what you sense from the Spirit within.
4. The tendency is to want to employ your own mind and reason this out... while not necessarily wrong it is less than the Spiritual breakthrough these exercises are intended to bring forth.

- iv. **My Longing Prayer** – from your longing statement, rephrase it in the form of a short prayer articulating or summarizing the desire of your heart.
 1. This prayer is a way of refocusing your mind and heart on what God is already doing in your life.
 2. God is always at work in sanctifying and transforming us into the image of Jesus. Prayer is a way we can cooperate with what God is doing.
- v. **Spiritual Longing Reflections** – what obstacles have you discovered or identified? Obstacles are typically lies or half-truths we have come to believe about ourselves.
 1. What prevents you from grasping your understanding of your longing? Example... fear, selfishness, impatience, etc. How do these shape your action?
 2. What “voices” do you hear that undermine your longing? Often what we hear we may think has originated in our own mind/heart... but actually may be people from our formative past that made statements or pronouncements about us that we continue to believe years later.
 3. Examples... you are a bad person, why can't you be like your brother? You're not good enough, you're not smart enough, you're lazy... etc.
 4. What future can you imagine if you believed what you think God is saying to you? What would it take for you to step out in faith into that future? Ask God to intervene to make the reality He is inviting you into possible.

5. **STAGE 4 - ACTION PLAN** - Now that you have written these things down, as a result of your discovery encounter, now what? Use the “Intentional Growth Form” to list some thoughts and measurable goals you desire to pursue. Who is God bringing to mind who can help you stay focused on your goals?

Intentional Growth Form

- a. **Guidance** – identify 3 or more specific and measurable goals that you can employ to encourage growth and personal/spiritual development based on your experience through this Spiritual Journey Discovery.
 - i. Thoughtfully identify areas of both strengths and weakness that you can attend to... where you can build up your strengths and overcome your weaknesses.

SF 2.2.1 – Spiritual Journey Discovery

- ii. List at least 3 for each segment... don't worry about prioritizing them now, just get the rough ideas down.
 - iii. Now that you have listed them, who can you work with as a coach or mentor to help keep you focused and prioritized on your plan components? Speak with your pastor or discipler to identify candidates.
 - iv. Set realistic goals and monitor your progress toward accomplishing them. Without a list of goals and objectives and a plan for implementing them, these remain only wishful thinking. Imagine greater!
- b. **Personal Equipping – Biblical Literacy Formation objectives – knowledge or skills you need to develop to move into your calling:**
- i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
- c. **Spiritual Development – Spiritual Formation objectives – personal character, personal walk with God, relationships with others, etc:**
- i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
- d. **Ministry Development – Leadership Formation objectives – begin to engage in ministry now depending on your gifting and calling. There are many ways you can make a difference now and discover more clearly where your gifting and passion lies:**
- i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.