

One off: Spiritual Formation

Discussion Guide

Introduction

Spiritual Formation in Christianity today often becomes focused on ourselves and our performance. It's easy to treat the Gospel as an "add-on" in our Rule of Life, rather than as the driving motivation and power behind it. For this reason, we need to constantly reframe our hearts around the Gospel, allowing it to shape and transform us.

Discussion

Opening (5 minutes)

How do you typically measure "spiritual growth"? How might that need to change?

Biblical Foundation (20 Minutes)

How Our Union with Christ Shapes our Spiritual Formation

Read Ephesians 1:3-14. This passage speaks of the doctrine of our Union with Christ. What insights do you gain about how you are united to Christ? How does that reality shape our spiritual formation – becoming more like Christ?

How might the doctrine of our Union with Christ change your understanding of your Spiritual Formation? Consider these quotes about our union with Christ from these theologians:

"[Our union with Christ is] that intimate, vital, and spiritual union between Christ and His people, in virtue of which He is the source of their life and strength, of their blessedness and salvation." - Louise Berkhof

"My hope lives not because I am not a sinner, but because I am a sinner for whom Christ died; my trust is not that I am holy, but that being unholy, He is my righteousness. My faith rests not upon what I am, or shall be, or feel, or know, but in what Christ is, in what He has done, and in what He is now doing for me." - Charles Spurgeon

How does this speak to our performanceism (the mindset that equates our identity and value directly to our performance and accomplishments)?

The Role of Community in our Spiritual Formation

When we think about sanctification or Spiritual Formation today, we typically orient it around what we do by ourselves, to ourselves, and for ourselves. But Scripture puts the emphasis on the practices of the Church as primary in our formation.

Read Acts 2:42-47. What insights do you gain about Spiritual Formation in the church community?

How have you experienced the teaching of the Word, the sacraments & corporate prayer impact your formation in Christ?

How does this speak to Individualism (the priority of self; self-discovery; self-work and promotion)?

Read Hebrews 10:24-25. What might “encouraging one another” look like for our community group?

Spiritual Formation culminates in outward facing, missional living.

Spiritual Formation is not an end in itself. Its ultimate purpose is to love God and love others. If our spiritual growth does not result in a heart for others, something is missing.

- LOVE the people that God puts on our path,
- LISTEN to their stories,
- LOOK for ways to help them find themselves in God’s story.

How have you seen or practiced this in the past week? What challenges or joys have you experienced in loving, listening, or looking?

As a community, how can we be on mission together? What might that look like for our CG?

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for Christ, who has pursued us and made us Your own. Thank You for overseeing every element of our story, from salvation to glory. Help us steward this journey of Spiritual Formation well, leaning on Your grace and the work of Your Spirit. Make us a community that spurs one another on, prioritizes Your people in our lives, and reflects the heart of Jesus. Teach us to love like Him, see others as You do, and share the Gospel boldly with those You place on our path. Amen.