



Nipawin Bible College
GE1022 – Spiritual Formation & Psalms (Deacon’s Track)
Winter 2024
2 Credit Hours
Mr. Jordan Bergen
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will frame the idea of Spiritual Formation within the context of Romans 8:29, “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.” Within this context, this class will strive to understand the unique calling of spiritual formation – what challenges present themselves, how our personalities come to bear on our walk with Christ, and how we might include practices in our lives that coordinate with the Holy Spirit’s transforming presence.

The Psalms have been central to the spiritual formation of Christians throughout history. The Psalms contain honest, appropriate expressions of emotion to God. As such, they are valuable passages for study and reflection as we seek to grow in intimate relationship with God. Special emphasis will be placed on the way in which we, as Christians, in light of Christ, ought to read and appropriate the Psalms.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

The Bible - text & audiobook (a translation, not a paraphrase). Audio Bibles are available from a variety of sources including the YouVersion Bible App. As you listen, please follow along with the written text. **80 pages.**

Whitney, Donald S. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, revised*. (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2014). **130 pages.** (Audiobook available on Audible.)

THE BIG QUESTIONS

What does it mean to be conformed to the image of Christ, and what part do I have in that process? How should my relationship with God be informed and transformed by the Psalms?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Appreciate the many ways in which God takes the initiative in drawing the student into a transformational relationship with him.

2. Explain who God made them to be and the ways in which they can be conformed to the image of Christ, growing deeper in their relationship with God and the Body of Christ as a result.
3. Confidently integrate their practice of spiritual disciplines into their lives on a weekly basis.
4. Use the appropriate interpretive tools in order to better understand God and meet with him through the Psalms.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Textbook Reading and Reflection: *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* – 35%

- Each student will be required to read **chapters 1-4 and 10** from the assigned textbook by Whitney. The student will write **1 sentence** for **each chapter** about how one principle within the chapter can be applied to *their* life (**not** “one’s life” or “a Christian’s life” or “our lives.” Use personal pronouns [I, me, my]). **1 page total.** Be specific with the application. Saying something like, “I plan to read my Bible more” will not reflect well on your grade.

Due: February 16th

Retreat and Reflection – 20%

- After reading/listening to chapter 10 in *Spiritual Disciplines* (“Silence and Solitude”), each student will **set apart 4 consecutive hours** in their day (example: 1pm – 5pm) to be alone with God. Spend this time doing things like reading God’s Word or a devotional book, praying, journaling, singing, fasting, and evaluating how God may be speaking to you. Avoid all screens and people to the best of your ability. **Using this time to do other homework or projects will have a significant negative impact on the grade.**
- A report on insights gained from your retreat will be required. Choose one of the following report methods:
 - Outline in point form how the retreat was conducted (1/3 of the report) and what you learned as a result of the experience (2/3 of the report). Use personal pronouns (I, me, my). **1 page total.**
 - **OR** you can make an appointment with the professor to discuss the retreat **instead of writing the paper.**

Due: March 1st

Bible Memory – 20%

- The student will memorize one of the following Psalms over the course of the semester (most are 5-9 verses long). When making the choice, the student should not only consider wordcount, rather, they should choose a Psalm that would be valuable for them to have internalized (longer Psalms will be penalized less per mistake).

- On the due date, the student will either:
 - Write out the Psalm from memory indicating the translation from which they memorized it.
 - OR make an appointment with the professor to do the passage verbally (the professor will follow along in the student's Bible).
- Psalm options: Psalm 1; Psalm 8; Psalm 14; Psalm 15; Psalm 43; Psalm 54; Psalm 61; Psalm 67; Psalm 70; Psalm 93; Psalm 100; Psalm 110; Psalm 113; Psalm 119; Psalm 124; Psalm 127; Psalm 130; Psalm 149.

Due: February 2nd

Bible Reading - 25%

- The student will listen to/read the entirety of the book of Psalms. On the due date they will indicate how many Psalms they read this semester out of the 150 Psalms in the Bible. In addition, the student will also specifically be asked whether or not they read Psalm 119, if not, ten percent of their grade for this assignment will be lost.

Due: January 26th

GRADING

Reading/Reflection (Whitney):	35%
Retreat/Reflection:	20%
Bible Memory:	20%
Bible Reading:	25%

Reading: 210 pages.

Writing: 2 pages.

Assignments will be due at the **beginning of the class period** on the day that they are assigned.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Refer to the NBC Handbook 2023-2024.

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY: Refer to the NBC Handbook 2023-2024.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION & PSALMS CLASS SCHEDULE

DATE	SUBJECT	READING	WRITTEN
1/19	Syllabus Review		
	Spiritual Formation		
1/26	Psalms	Psalms: 80p	
	Spiritual Formation		
2/2	Psalms		Psalm Memory
	Spiritual Formation		
2/9	Psalms		
	Spiritual Formation		
2/16	Psalms		
	Spiritual Formation	Whitney: 130p	Reflection: 1p
2/23	READING BREAK		
3/1	Psalms		
	Spiritual Formation		Retreat Reflection: 1p
3/8	No Class		
3/15	Psalms		
	Spiritual Formation		
3/22	Psalms		
	Spiritual Formation		
3/29	No Class		
4/5	Psalms		
4/5	Spiritual Formation		
4/8	Spiritual Formation		
4/8	Spiritual Formation		

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York, NY: Touchstone, 1995.
- Brother Lawrence. *The Practice of the Presence of God*. Boston, MA: New Seeds Books, 2005.
- DeYoung, Kevin. *Crazy Busy*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013.
- Ortberg, John. *The Life You've Always Wanted*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997.
- Packer, J.I. *Knowing God*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973.
- Willard, Dallas, and Don Simpson. *Revolution of Character: Discovering Christ's Pattern for Spiritual Transformation*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005.

PSALMS

- Futato, Mark D., and George M. Schwab. *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Volume 7: Psalms, Proverbs*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2009.
- Goldingay, John. *Psalms: Volume 1*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006.
- _____. *Psalms: Volume 2*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007.
- _____. *Psalms: Volume 3*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Wilson, Gerald. *The NIV Application Commentary: Psalms, Volume 1*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.
- Tucker Jr., W. Dennis, and Jamie A. Grant. *The NIV Application Commentary: Psalms, Volume 2*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018.