



In His Presence: Five Key Processes in Spiritual Formation

WORSHIP: Still/ Jesus, Lover of My Soul/ Our God is Greater/ I Lift My Hands by Chris Tomlin

WELCOME: Willow in the Wind (5 mins)

One person stands blindfolded with their arms crossed at his chest in the middle of a circle of 10 - 12 people. The rest of the group forms a circle surrounding the blindfolded member. They should be standing so that their fingertips are almost touching the person in the center. They then take turns nudging/pushing and then catching the blindfolded person. This is a trust activity. How easy/ difficult is it to trust blindly? Or surrender yourself to the mercy of your group?

WORD:

We live in a world where we are taught to be content with shallow commitments, but God is telling us that He wants us to cultivate an attitude of striving to have a deep relationship with Him.

There are five processes by which this spiritual formation can happen --- this is the journey we must take in order to achieve that transformation God wants us to have.

OUR SEARCH (Psalm 46:10)

“Be still, and know that I am God”

- “Be still” does not literally mean to keep still but rather it means to loosen up, to cease striving.
- In Hebrew, the word is *Raphah* which means to let go or to release.
- God is asking us to “be still” from the churning within – the churning caused by fears, anxieties, and worries which lead to frustration, disappointments and anger.
- Our tendency is to do a *quick search* for God but God calls us to do **quiet search** for Him.
- He wants us to quiet our souls before Him so He can speak to us.
- He wants us to understand that we should not depend on our abilities and perspective but rather find ourselves in His presence and know that He is in control.
- God invites us to:
 1. Cultivate a regular listening to Him and His Word
 2. To rest in God and in His timing
 3. To not complain and grumble against God.

OUR STRUGGLES (Ephesians 5:15-18)

“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity,

because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit”

- In the midst of the confusion, struggle, battle around us and within us, we should find the distinction between *knowing* God’s will and *doing* God’s will.
 - o Verse 17 says don’t act thoughtlessly but understand what the Lord wants you to do
 - o We struggle to *understand*.
 - o We struggle to *do*.
- We struggle because there are two natures within us. Romans 7:14-20. There is within us the constant battle between 2 opposing forces --
 - which ever we choose to nourish and feed determines the kind of spiritual life we will have.

OUR SURRENDER (Proverbs 3:5-6)

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight”

- “with all your heart and in all your ways”. This does not refer to our blood pump, but rather this means that we should trust our Lord with everything we have. Complete trust. Complete surrender.
- Surrender is not about giving up but rather it is about giving in to God’s love and grace. It is not about what God takes from us, but what he gives to us.
- Often times the Lord will bring us to a place of helplessness to teach us to surrender.

- In the process of surrendering, we have to understand the power of prayer. Prayer is not dependent on how eloquent we are, or how mature we are spiritually. Prayer does not depend on us but on the grace of God. This is exactly what surrendering means. When we understand that it is not about us but about God.

OUR SERVICE (John 12:26)

“Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.”

- God calls us to a fruitful life in Christ. In order to develop this, we must understand that:
 1. The approval of God is of utmost importance.
 2. Our labor is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58)
- The secret to serving is Christ is this: “ If anyone wants to serve Me, he must follow Me.” Here Jesus points out 2 important things:
 - o That serving Jesus is a choice.
 - o That when we make the choice to serve Him, it is on His terms, not ours.

OUR SIGNIFICANCE (John 14:2-3)

“My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a

place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

- “receive you unto Myself” this emphasizes that our dwelling place in God is not geographical, but rather relational. It is our relationship with Him, our identity in Him that means anything.
- Our identity revealed. Who are we? versus Whose are we?
 - o God redeems us for the purpose of receiving us unto Himself.
 - o Our significance lies in our identity in Him
- Our destiny revealed. What we are to do for God versus What has been done by God.
 - o “It is not the important things we do that makes a significant life, rather it is the significant life that makes the things we do important.”

Discussion Questions:

1. Which among the five key processes had the most impact on you? Why?
2. Where are you having difficulties in your journey of intimacy with God based on the 5 key processes? In your search for identity? In your struggles? In your process of surrendering? In your service? In finding your significance?
3. In the activity done at the start of the meeting, how difficult do you think it was to be blindfolded and pushed around not knowing if someone was going to catch you?

WORKS:

Read John 21:15-22 v22 “You must follow me.”

Take time and meditate on this passage. Answer the following questions in your journal.

1. What am I searching for in my life?
2. What does the verse “ If love you Me . . . you must follow Me” mean to you?
3. What has God specifically asked you to surrender to Him?
4. What is the biggest difficulty/ hindrance you have in giving God your total surrender?
5. After these realizations, what do you commit yourself to?

Being in the presence of God means to follow Jesus. . . to allow Jesus to become the lover of our souls.

Spend time in prayer and reflection, seek God and in repentance receive God’s empowering grace for sanctification. Ask your Dgroup and your accountability partner to pray with you as you take your first steps in your journey to surrendering to God all of your heart and in all of your ways.