

MENTOR GUIDE

MODULE 4: SPIRITUAL FORMATION

INTRODUCTION

In this module, **Danielle Pathak** teaches the importance of intentional spiritual formation—both for personal life and leadership—and offers practical wisdom on engaging with spiritual disciplines.



These two videos will help you answer two central questions:

- Why is my spiritual formation important to my life and leadership?
- How can spiritual practices help me grow?

SESSION 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Video Notes

- 1. Our first formation directly influences our spiritual formation.** We all ask big “soul” questions about our purpose and place in the world. Ultimately, God is asking us to take those big questions about our purpose and healing and connect them to God’s bigger story - which also connects us to others and allows us to participate in the work of God’s Kingdom.
- 2. Spiritual formation is ultimately about becoming more like Jesus.** 2 Corinthians 3:17-18. We are shaped by the things we pay the most attention to. Spiritual formation puts Jesus at the center of our transformation. We are invited to become more like Jesus by allowing the Lord to bring our attention to areas where he invites us into a new way of being.
- 3. Spiritual formation must acknowledge first formation.** Everyone comes to faith with a story and pain from the past. In spiritual formation, the Lord invites us to be healed if we say yes.
- 4. Spiritual formation is rooted in community.** It must be deeply rooted in the life of the community and the life of people. If we separate our spiritual formation from other people, we miss out on a deep layer of healing God has for us. God invites us to move our individual work into a space where people can see and mentor us.
- 5. Spiritual formation happens intentionally.** Having a plan based on how you want to grow and how God is inviting you to grow is vitally important. Gaining control over your schedule is key to this plan.

SESSION 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Participant Reflection Questions

After watching the video, participants will answer or journal the following questions for reflection. Feel free to utilize these questions for discussion at your next Coaching Session.

1. Danielle said that when someone comes to faith, they do not truly start with a blank slate for spiritual formation. Instead, their first formation has impacted their spiritual formation from day one. Take a few minutes to reflect on the beginning of your spiritual journey. How do you think your first days, months, etc., of your new spiritual life in Jesus were positively or negatively impacted by your First Formation?
2. Can you think of ways that, through your spiritual formation, God has already been at work in healing places of hurt that may have come from your earlier life? Are there areas of your life today that you feel God may be inviting you to pay attention to as He is lovingly forming you into the image of Jesus?
3. Danielle spoke about the importance of community, of letting others see us and speak into our lives, in spiritual formation. Does the thought of inviting more people into your spiritual life make you excited, hopeful, hesitant, or afraid? Spend some time writing about that question in a journal or notebook. Why do you think you feel that way?

4. Are you someone who prioritizes or intentionally plans your spiritual formation? If so, how have you seen this impact your spiritual life?

If not, what do you think about intentionally scheduling time for spiritual formation in your life? Take some time to consider how intentionally prioritizing and scheduling time for spiritual formation may impact your spiritual formation.

SESSION 2: STRENGTHENING YOUR SOUL THROUGH SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Video Notes

- 1. Before you see the outward effects of transformation, you must pay attention to your inner life - to the health of your soul.** John Ortberg says your soul integrates your will, mind, and body into a single life. A soul is healthy when these three parts are in harmony. He writes, “When you are connected with God and other people in life, you have a healthy soul.”
- 2. Your work of formation is to recognize the places where your soul (your will, your mind, your body) is disintegrated or unhealthy.** When you see areas of your life that are not integrated or healthy, you can choose to move toward integration and greater health.
- 3. Paying attention to your inner life is essential for healthy leadership.** When leaders do not pay attention to needs in their inner lives (because they are unseen by others, or because they seem less urgent or less important), they and their ministry are in danger.

Healthy leaders are held to account for their inner lives.
- 4. You can steward an inner life that looks like Jesus in your current culture.** To do so, you need a well-thought-out plan that must be revisited and revised repeatedly as your life changes. Soul transformation needs the same kind of workout plan that you might use for your physical health.

- 5. Your soul needs a combination of spiritual disciplines incorporating outward and contemplative practices.** This approach to spiritual formation leads to a healthier spiritual life and greater transformation, even if it feels slower or unfamiliar.

- 6. Keep the love of Jesus at the center of your spiritual practices.** This work is slow, but you will see progress over time.

SESSION 2: STRENGTHENING YOUR SOUL THROUGH SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Reflection Questions

1. Danielle said that spiritual formation begins with tending to your soul - where your will, your mind, and your body integrate. Spend time reflecting on how you were taught to think about your soul and spiritual life. In what ways is this way of thinking about your soul similar to how you were previously taught? In what ways is it different?
2. The disintegration of the harmony within a person, between a person and God, and between people began in the Garden of Eden and continues in our culture today. Even the nature and needs of church ministry can lead to neglecting inner selves to meet the needs of external work. How have you experienced this pull toward disintegration or un-health in your own time in the church? If you haven't experienced it personally, reflect on how that might happen to a leader based on what you know about ministry in the church.

What aspect of your inner life do you think God may be asking you to pay attention to as you grow as a leader in your church?

3. When you think about spiritual disciplines (both those that Danielle named as well as others you know of), which ones do you most quickly gravitate towards? Which do you have a harder time engaging with? Why do you think that is?
4. When you reflect on the information in this video, what makes you most hopeful about your spiritual formation? What questions or concerns does it raise?

ACTIVATION ASSIGNMENT

Put This Into Practice

In this module, participants are encouraged to complete a 4-6 hour personal retreat that guides them through a reflection of the previous year, and helps them focus on a specific area or areas God is leading them to focus on in the coming year.

For more information about this retreat, click [here](#).

MENTOR SESSION GUIDE

This meeting is where the gold is at! Participants will gain loads of knowledge in the virtual classroom. But the real transformation and development of VLE: Foundations will happen in the context of the time you are spending with this group, collectively and individually. So press into the relational aspect more than anything. Use this time to observe:

- Who needs encouragement to step it up a notch?
- Who needs correction?
- Who is showing signs of increasing leadership capacity?
- Who needs to be encouraged to take their next step?
- Who needs prayer or ministry?
- As you observe these things, say something at your first opportunity. Have an “ICNU” conversation – “If you see it, say it!” These moments are catalytic in the lives of those you mentor.

One more tip: don’t do all of this yourself. Begin to enlist participants to serve or lead different aspects of the coaching session. This could be leading prayer time, welcoming people at the front door, or organizing snacks and coffee.

Connection time (10 minutes). The relationships formed among VLE participants are central to the process. Avoid rushing into content at the start of the session. Instead, take a couple of minutes for participants around the circle to popcorn how their week has been, initial thoughts on the material covered, etc. This is a great opportunity to connect with participants and get the conversation warmed up.

Celebration time (10 minutes). Ask the group if they have seen God do something in their lives or ministry in the past two weeks that they'd like to share. This is an opportunity for you, the facilitator, to affirm and reinforce the good growth happening in your group.

Coaching time (40 minutes). Share with the group some of your own journey in emotional health. Your vulnerability to show up authentically here is really important as participants will be testing the waters for a safe environment to share their own stories.

Walk through key discussion questions and activation questions from the module. Because the participants should have completed reflection questions and activation assignments in advance of this session, we encourage you to use this time to ask:

- In what area(s) do you want to grow this year (emotionally, spiritually, physically, etc)?
- When times get tough this year, what truth or value do you want to remember about yourself and God?
- What are life-giving ways to connect with God this year? Do you have intentional places in your schedule to pursue these?
- Have participants share their One Word activity from the activation assignment.

Care & Prayer / Ministry Time (25 minutes). This is arguably the most important thing you can do in these sessions. In ministry time, we provide space for the work of the Holy Spirit among us. You can change this up according to the way the Spirit is moving. You could have a “Hot Seat” in the center and have the group pray for someone, you could have groups of 2 or 3 split up and pray for each other, or you can pray collectively for the group.

Communication time (5 minutes). This is the time to highlight important events, share church announcements, introduce the next module topic, and so forth.