

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

Participants will be asked to participate in a **half-day solitude retreat**, designed by Danielle Pathak. While the retreat is written for the start of a new calendar year, it is useful for reflecting on the previous 12 months and setting goals for the 12 months to come, whether completed in January, October, or any month in the middle.

Here is what they need before they begin:

1. Read through the [Personal Reflection Retreat Guide](#).
2. Choose a dedicated time and place to complete the retreat without distractions.
3. Gather the necessary materials, including a pen and paper, to write down responses to the included questions.

Then, go on a retreat!

After their personal reflection retreat, they will return to the activation assignment to complete the following questions:

Thinking about the year ahead:

- What brings you excitement/joy personally, as you think about a new year?
- 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 you willing to struggle for this year to accomplish your goals? Examples: pain or discomfort of a new workout, new routine or habit, letting go of past hurt and pursuing healing.
- What are life-giving ways to connect with God this year? Do you have intentional places in your schedule to pursue these?
- Who is someone in your life who can provide support and accountability in this process?
- Now, submit a picture of your "One Word" exercise. You should also bring the physical copy of this activity to your next mentor meeting.

MENTOR SESSION GUIDE

While the content we've provided will be impactful for participants, as a VLE mentor, the time you spend helping participants process will be transformative. Please use this time to make thoughtful observations and be prepared to speak into their lives. This time together will provide many opportunities to have an "ICNU (I See In You) Conversation", which will be catalytic in their growth and development! Here is a sample agenda you might consider using for your time together:

Connection (5-10 minutes). This is a great opportunity for small talk, to warm up the conversation. You can ask how their week has been, or if they have anything exciting coming up.

Celebration (5-10 minutes). Ask them 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 to affirm and reinforce the good growth that is happening.

Coaching Conversation (40 minutes). See Coaching Conversation Section on the next page. This portion will be specific to each module.

Care & Prayer (10-20 minutes). As you wrap up your time together, make space for the work of the Holy Spirit. This could look different every time, especially if you are meeting with an individual versus a group. If you are with an individual, you could ask if the Holy Spirit has brought anything to the surface for them, and then pray into that. If you are with a group, this might be an opportunity for a hot seat, or for participants to break off into pairs and pray for each other.

Closing Communication (5 minutes). This is the time to highlight the next module, important church events, or announcements, etc.

MODULE 4: COACHING CONVERSATION

Module 4: Spiritual Formation centers around the role spiritual practices play in shaping our souls and leadership. Danielle Pathak invites us to explore our first formation, our rhythms, and our community.

1. First, begin with your own reflection. Share how you've grown over the years in your own spiritual formation. What rhythms have helped you stay grounded? Practicing vulnerability, also share any areas that you may struggle (specific intentional rhythms, neglected areas of soul integration, etc).

2. Next, invite participants to share by asking:

Looking back over this year, what area of your soul is God inviting you to pay attention to?

Share in pairs or small groups (or share with you if in a 1:1 conversation).

3. Take some time to reflect on some of the major themes of this module:

As you name each theme, share any of your own experiences and observations about yourself before asking participants to share.

- **First Formation:** How did your early spiritual experiences shape your walk with Jesus today?
- **Formation in Community:** What's it like for you to let others into your spiritual journey?
- **Intentional Rhythms:** Do you plan spiritual rhythms? Why or why not? What's worked for you?
- **Soul Integration:** Which part of your soul (mind, body, will) feels strong? What part feels neglected?

4. Wrapping up – **if participants completed their Solitude Retreat or the “One Word” exercise, ask them:**
 - What word or theme did God give you for this season?
 - What does it mean to you, and what response is God inviting?

5. **As you move into prayer and ministry time, invite the Spirit to highlight what he might be drawing attention to and what invitation he might be extending.** Use silence, hot seat prayer, or blessing over spiritual rest and renewal.