

Spiritual Direction Essays

Answers should be 3-5 sentences unless otherwise indicated.

Each major section is begun with a prayer reflection. I highly recommend doing each section as a separate sitting, do not attempt to answer all these questions in one sitting.

Who am I?

PRAYER EXERCISE: for 5 minutes (set a timer) sit in silence asking God to be near. Next for 10 minutes, pray “Jesus you are God’s beloved, Jesus I am your beloved” repeat slowly, allow the truth of the words to seep in.

Write a two sentence answer to the question “WHO AM I?”

What does your answer reveal about what you value?

How have you received the love of Jesus in your life?

“The greatest trap in life is not success, popularity, or power, but self-rejection doubting who we truly are. Success, popularity and power can indeed present a great temptation, but their seductive quality comes from the way they are part of the much larger temptation to self-rejection. When we have come to believe in the voices that call us worthless and unlovable, then success, popularity, and power are easily perceived as attractive solutions.”--Henry Nouwen

Reflect on the quote above: how do you find yourself drawn to these temptations and how does that reflect areas where you have rejected your primary identity as the beloved of Jesus?

Where have I been?

PRAYER EXERCISE: Pray a version of Ignatius’ Examen prayer.

- Come before God in silence—3 minutes in silence
- Ask God to draw to your mind memories of your past—spend 3 minutes waiting for God to show you memories
- Ask God to see these memories through his eyes—spend 3 minutes reviewing previous memories
- Ask God to help you see his presence in these memories—3 minutes
- Ask God to help you see your need for forgiveness and your need to forgive in these memories—3 minutes

What moments in your life with God stand out as crucial in your spiritual journey? Describe these moments **succinctly** and indicate their main intellectual, emotional, and spiritual significance. *Try to keep this entire answer to 1 typed page.*

What person, books, movements, ideas, etc. have played a significant role in your spiritual growth? *Short list, indicate person or book then a one sentence summary of impact.*

Where am I going?

PRAYER EXERCISE: Read and Pray through Psalm 132.

When you imagine yourself successful in your marriage, parenting, and work what do you envision?

What does your answer reveal about what you value?

When you think of the three major ways we experience God (speaking to God, hearing from God, and speaking to one another) where do you see your greatest gifts and your greatest needs?

Who is God?

PRAYER EXERCISE: A guided meditation of Psalm 46:10

- Be Still: be silent before God for an extended period of time
- Be Still AND KNOW: ask God to open your heart so that you can know Him.
- Be Still and Know that I am God: spend an extended period of time adoring God.
- Be Still and Know that I am the God who loves you: meditate on the God who is worthy of all your worship and yet loves you.

How do you picture God? When you close your eyes what does God look and sound like?

When have you felt God's absence? What was/is the impact on your faith?

When have you felt God's personal presence? What was/is the impact on your faith?

How might I serve?

PRAYER EXERCISE: Hear from God (select a psalm and read it and meditate on how it might be God's word to you today), Let God Hear from You (spend time sharing your heart, do your

best not to pray for others but for your own heart and desire to follow Jesus), Hear from one another (call a friend and offer to pray for them and ask them to pray for you).

How might ministry and service happen while you are relaxing and enjoying being with others?

Who within your community ministers with you and to you?

What pain and suffering have you experienced that have brought you to this point in your life?
We minister to one another when we answer and listen to the answer to this question.

When you can't fix a problem, how can you simply be present with someone in pain or trouble help?

Can you accept your powerlessness in ministry?