
APPENDIX 1

Spiritual Growth Planner

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting."*

PSALM 139:23-24

THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH PLANNER INVITES YOU to allow God to search your thoughts and explore the orientation of your soul. While a tool like this can never assess the interiority of a soul, it can give a glimpse of where you are at a particular moment in time. The spiritual growth planner acts like the marks we put on the door frame to show the kids how much they have grown. The marks reveal the progress of an organic, invisible process we call growth. These measurements don't force growth to happen; they reveal where you are and where you hope to be next time you get measured.

The planner is a way to mark your inertia, your desire and your growth. It is rather like taking your blood pressure as a measure of your health. If you take the inventory in another six months, you may be able to see where the invisible process of growth is producing fruit or not. This is no one-size-fits-all program—just the invitation to recognize where God is at work and calling you deeper into himself.

This spiritual growth planner will not measure behavior or chart standards of excellence. It can't assess your qualification for leadership, your gifting or your ministry skills. It won't account for the fruit of the Spirit in your life, nor will it fix your soul. This planner can, however, put you in touch with a longing or desire for God that translates into intentional motivation for the spiritual journey. Disciplines don't work by fiat. Spiritual disciplines must be engaged in freely and out of desire for God, not outward appearance. Desires can keep you open to God even when nothing seems to be happening. Attend to the desires rummaging around in your soul. Notice where the Holy Spirit is nudging you toward love of God, neighbor and self. The goal of the Christian life is not so much a set of behaviors as it is an orientation of the soul toward God and his kingdom.

Each section of the planner asks questions that attend not simply to outward behavior but to the roots of behavior. Don't blitz through the inventory section. Take time to notice your desires and inclinations as well as your resistances.

HINTS FOR

Linear thinkers: The inventory provides some structure and "next steps." It allows you to form your own spiritual health plan and set goals if you so desire.

Intuitive people: You may find the question grid frustrating because it seems boxy and incomplete. The open-ended questions at the beginning of each section, along with the box marked "desire," may be most helpful for you. If you are not someone who likes structure, name your reticence as you take an intentional look at your soul. If you begin to feel you should desire all of the disciplines or that you should do something about everything that is missing in your life at once, stop. Ask God to help you discern your most important desire at the moment. Stay with that.

New disciples: You may feel both overwhelmed and excited by all the disciplines. Remember that your goal is not to master all of these disciplines. You are simply to make a beginning. Attend to the desire of your heart and the prompting of the Holy Spirit in this particular moment.

For the sake of brevity, this inventory is designed around the acronym WORSHIP. Each letter of the word *worship* represents a way we can open ourselves to God. Within each of these headings are a series of practices and relationships that can help you grow more deeply in your worship of God. Begin by asking yourself, *Which one of these seven expressions of desire for God resonates most deeply within me?* Underline the word that connects with you. What would you like to see happen in your life of worship? Name your longings, desperations and needs that surface for you in each area. (Briefly write your response to each category in the box.)

Where are you today in your desire to

Worship the Trinity	
Open yourself to God	
Relinquish the false self and idols of your heart	
Share your life	
Hear God's Word	
Incarnate the love of Christ	
Pray your life	

Choose your strongest desire and go through the following assessment.

WORSHIP THE TRINITY

Am I celebrating the love and glory of God with reverence and joy (Psalm 95:1-7)? Explain.

Where am I longing to move into deeper celebration of God?

The following is from "The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us" written by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun. To be used for educational purposes only. Copyrights are the property of the author, Adele Ahlberg Calhoun.

Fill out the chart below using the following guide: 1 = not true, 2 = needs improvement, 3 = most of the time, 4 = consistently true. Choose one or two categories for which you feel a deep or passionate desire. Put a check in the "Desire" column.

	1	2	3	4	Desire
I am aware of God's presence in my life, confident of his love for me and intentionally celebrate our connection.					
Worshipping with fellow believers gives me a deep sense of joy and God's presence.					
I take time to celebrate God and acknowledge my limits by deeply entering into a weekly sabbath day that is different from every other day.					
I am aware of where I place people, experiences and images before God.					
I am a joyful, thankful person who expresses gratitude to God and others easily and often.					

Total Score: _____

Note which desire most resonates with you and touches a longing to go deeper with God in this place.

OPEN MYSELF TO GOD

How am I opening myself up to God in deeper ways?

Where am I longing to let go of defenses and busyness so I can become more open to God's activity in my life?

Fill out the chart below using the following guide: 1 = not true, 2 = needs improvement, 3 = most of the time, 4 = consistently true. Choose one or two categories for which you feel a deep or passionate desire. Put a check in the "Desire" column.

	1	2	3	4	Desire
I regularly and intentionally make space in my life for prayerfully listening to God at home, at work and with others.					
I can admit my mistakes, weaknesses and growing edges to God as well as others.					
I enjoy time spent alone with God in quiet reflection.					

	1	2	3	4	Desire
I recognize and live freely within my limits. I pay attention to my feelings, my body, my losses and my needs.					
I don't need to be doing something for God or others in order to feel good about myself.					

Total Score: _____

Note which desire most resonates with you and touches a longing to go deeper with God in this place.

RELINQUISH THE FALSE SELF AND IDOLS OF YOUR HEART

How am I growing in self-awareness and becoming more authentic in my relationships?

Where am I longing to let go of secondary things so I can give myself more authentically to God and others?

Fill out the chart below using the following guide: 1 = not true, 2 = needs improvement, 3 = most of the time, 4 = consistently true. Choose one or two categories for which you feel a deep or passionate desire. Put a check in the "Desire" column.

	1	2	3	4	Desire
I am aware of my sin and blind spots and how they hurt others. I easily apologize to others and seek to live out of my true self in Christ.					
I am able to leave the crowded, noisy world of acclaim and doing behind, retreating into silence and solitude with God and letting him restore me.					
I recognize the voice and activity of the Holy Spirit in my life.					
I recognize my addictions and compulsions, and am committed to living free of them.					

Total Score: _____

Note which desire most resonates with you and touches a longing to go deeper with God in this place.

SHARE MY LIFE

Am I connecting with God and others in a caring community? Explain.

How am I longing to be with others in spiritual community?

Fill out the chart below using the following guide: 1 = not true, 2 = needs improvement, 3 = most of the time, 4 = consistently true. Choose one or two categories for which you feel a deep or passionate desire. Put a check in the "Desire" column.

	1	2	3	4	Desire
I have a relationship with someone who helps me grow in my spiritual walk.					
I feel comfortable opening my home, my heart, my faith and my life to people not in my family.					
I am not judgmental toward others. I know how to make peace and deal with anger in constructive ways. I am not argumentative and contentious.					
Others describe me as honest, vulnerable, open and approachable.					
I am not hypersensitive and easily offended. I give and receive love freely and easily.					

Total Score: ____

Note which desire most resonates with you and touches a longing to go deeper with God in this place.

HEAR GOD'S WORD

Am I cultivating the knowledge of God, the character of Christ and the presence of the Spirit in my life (John 16:5-15)? Explain.

Do I want to connect more deeply with God and his Word? If so, how?

Fill out the chart below using the following guide: 1 = not true, 2 = needs improvement, 3 = most of the time, 4 = consistently true. Choose one or two categories for which you feel a deep or passionate desire. Put a check in the "Desire" column.

	1	2	3	4	Desire
I am growing in biblical literacy and know how scriptural truth intersects with my life.					

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	1	2	3	4	Desire
On a regular basis I am nourished by spending time with God and his Word.					
The Bible is alive and interesting to me.					
I have a plan for reading Scripture.					

Total Score: _____

Note which desire most resonates with you and touches a longing to go deeper with God in this place.

INCARNATE CHRIST'S LOVE

Am I contributing myself and my God-given gifts for the growth of Christ's kingdom? Explain.

How am I giving myself and my resources away to God and others?

Fill out the chart below using the following guide: 1 = not true, 2 = needs improvement, 3 = most of the time, 4 = consistently true. Choose one or two categories for which you feel a deep or passionate desire. Put a check in the "Desire" column.

	1	2	3	4	Desire
I work for justice and have a heart for the dispossessed and needy that is visible to others.					
I am just and fair in dealing with others. I honor my contracts and commitments, even if they inconvenience me.					
I know my gifts and contribute them to the kingdom of God. I am more concerned about building God's kingdom than my own.					
I willingly set aside my agenda in order to share my possessions, skills and time with others.					
The fruit of the Spirit is more and more evident in my life.					
People with problems, needs, sorrows and losses seek me out. They know I care.					

Total Score: _____

Note which desire most resonates with you and touches a longing to go deeper with God in this place.

PRAY MY LIFE

Am I attending to God's activity in my life and listening to him on a regular basis? Explain.

Where am I longing to connect more deeply with God? What do I want this to look like?

Fill out the chart below using the following guide: 1 = not true, 2 = needs improvement, 3 = most of the time, 4 = consistently true. Choose one or two categories for which you feel a deep or passionate desire. Put a check in the "Desire" column.

	1	2	3	4	Desire
It's easy for me to get around to prayer.					
My prayer life is not mostly about myself and my needs.					
I am able to authentically pray my emotions, losses, anger, doubts and desires. I feel comfortable telling God all the 'good, bad and ugly' in me.					
I am comfortable praying out loud with others.					
I am aware of how God speaks to me, and I know how to listen to God and recognize his voice.					

Total Score: _____

Note which desire most resonates with you and touches a longing to go deeper with God in this place.

Look back over the personal growth planner and your life as a worshiper. Write your score totals below. They reveal areas of desire, neglect and need. Consider who you want to become. For each category, pick one growing edge that engages your desire to become more like Christ. Write it in the box below.

	Score	Desire
Worship the Trinity		
Open to God		
Relinquish the false self and idols of the heart		
Share my life		

	Score	Desire
Hear God's Word		
Incarnate the love of Christ		
Pray my life		

Number the desires in order of importance to you. Attending to the category of your deepest desire, turn to the table of contents where the disciplines are listed under their corresponding heading for WORSHIP, found on pages 7-8. Which discipline peaks your interest? Notice the desire listed immediately beside the name of that spiritual discipline. Which desire resonates with your own desire? When you find a desire that resonates with your own, you have found a practice, relationship or experience that provides you with a way to make space for the God you worship. This spiritual discipline can be a gift to you on your journey.