

Choose one of the essay prompts below. Each essay is graded on a scale of 10 points and each essay is worth 20% of the final course grade.

FORMAT: Each essay must be 650-1,000 words, 1.5 spacing, with 12-point Arial or Times New Roman font. Please include your full name, date, and which essay prompt you are answering.

Word count is required at the bottom of the last page.

Essay P1M1

Prompt #1 - Growing in Spiritual Maturity

What determines a Christian's spiritual maturity?

Which qualities are you personally quick to recognize in spiritually mature people?

Choose a bible character and analyze how this person either grew or deteriorated in their spiritual maturity over time.

- Identify at least three qualities (character, personality, or gifting) that this person was known for in Scripture and reference the verses that you use.
- How does each quality inform your view of his/her development in spiritual maturity?
- How do you think other people around this character experienced him/her? Why?
- What is an over-arching lesson or warning that you can apply from this character's life to your own when it comes to spiritual maturity?

Prompt #2 - Temptation through the Soul

Identify the three parts of the human soul.

For each part of the soul, find one biblical example demonstrating how it was brought under the sway of temptation or into sin. (Do not use the same bible chapter for all three examples).

Consider the specific ways that you have recognized each portion of your own soul being tempted or swayed into sin in the past.

- Explain how you recognized the presence of temptation (what did you see, hear, feel, think) when that specific part of your soul was being influenced. Make sure to address all three parts
- How did you overcome each of these moments of temptation?
- Identify one spiritual tool/ practice that can bring each portion of the soul into submission to the Holy Spirit.

Prompt #3 - Developing Christlikeness

Pick one bible character that you feel connected to. Look for the five processes that God uses to form people within your character's story. Use scripture references for each claim you make.

- What difficulty or trial did this character face that altered him/her? What about the character was changed?
- What is one spiritual discipline that this bible character embraced that served him/her well over time? How do you recognize it was a practice and not a one-time event?
- Who was a significant relationship in this character's life that God used to form him/her? What impact did this relationship have?
- Identify a moment of inner healing where this character was changed for the better OR what you observe needed to be healed in his/her heart and mind but never was.
- What is a significant encounter that this character had with God and how did it change him/her
- Which one of the five processes in this bible character's life do you think had the greatest impact on his/her ministry and why?

Essay - P1M2

Prompt #1 - Recognizing and Dismantling Strongholds

What is a stronghold in the human soul and why are strongholds dangerous?
How can someone recognize the presence of a stronghold?

Consider a time when you recognized a stronghold within your soul AND a time when you recognized a stronghold outside of you (this could be within a group, another person, a location, etc).

- Explain how you recognized the presence of the stronghold in both scenarios. How did you discern this wasn't just a one-time issue or occurrence?
- What part(s) of your soul (mind, will, or emotions) did the stronghold most impact? For the stronghold outside of you, which portion of the soul (or the souls within the collective group) was most influenced?
- What did you do (or should you have done) to break the stronghold in each situation?
- Do you believe the stronghold was successfully demolished in each scenario? Explain why or why not.

Prompt #2 - Reading Souls v Discerning God's Voice

Explain an occurrence where you discerned what was happening in someone else's soul (negatively or positively) without him/her informing you.

Explain an occurrence where you received a word from God for or about someone and how you knew it was God, not just the person's soul, communicating to you.

Read through Genesis 30-31 and consider the relationship between Jacob and Laban.

- Give an example in the text where you observe one of the men picking up something happening in the other's soul. Cite the verse(s) to support your answer.
- Give an example of where one of the men hears directly from God about the other. Cite the verse(s) to support your answer.
- Look for a pattern of behavior/ thoughts/ words in one of the men that could demonstrate the presence of a stronghold in his soul.
 - Describe the pattern (this requires 2 examples from the text)
 - Name the stronghold (examples: lust, lying, fear, control, etc)

- Share if you believe this stronghold was eventually broken down or not. Support your answer using the text.

Prompt #3 - The Struggle Between the Soul and Spirit (Applying the Star of David Metaphor)

Identify the 3 parts of the human soul

Identify the 3 parts of the spirit

Identify the portion of your soul that struggles most in submitting to the spirit and how you have recognized this.

Give an example of a spiritual discipline you have utilized to bring this part of your soul into submission to the spirit. Does it help? Why or why not?

Explain how you can use the power of agreement within your spirit to bring this unruly portion of your soul into submission.

- Correctly identify the 2 parts of your spirit that must be strengthened to pull this portion of your soul into agreement with the spirit
- Share about a time when you used the power of agreement in the context of a Christian community to help your soul submit to the spirit's leadership.
- What portion of your soul was struggling and how did it affect you?
- Who did you identify as spiritually strong enough to rely on for help? What part of his or her spirit did you hope to be strengthened by?
- How were you ministered to? Did leaning on the power of agreement within community work for you?

Essay P1M3

Prompt #1 - Old Testament v New Testament Prophets (Moses & Jesus)

Define what a prophet is.

- Did the role of a prophet change after the New Covenant was inaugurated? Why or why not?

Identify the three functions that Moses (and all prophets) undertake to steward God's covenant to His people properly.

Why is the relationship between a prophet and the covenant he/she represents important in the context of prophetic ministry today?

Select a scenario in the Old Testament when Moses or a prophet after him performs a miracle or operates supernaturally. Cite the verse(s) you reference.

- Explain how the prophet or his miracle embodies a truth or expression of the Old Covenant.

Select a scenario in the New Testament when Jesus stands in the role of a prophet by performing a miracle or operating supernaturally. Cite the verse(s) you reference.

Explain how Jesus or his miracle embodies a truth or expression of the New Covenant.

Prompt #2 - Inward, Outward, Upward - Prophetic Functions

Explain the differences between inward, outward, and upward prophetic functions.

Share a testimony of when you experienced an inward prophetic function. Make sure to include:

- How the revelation came to you and what the message was
- How this revelation impacted you and your relationship with God

Share a testimony of when God used you to operate in an outward prophetic function. Make sure to include:

- Which type of outward prophetic function you operated in and how the revelation connected to it came to you
- The message that God wanted to communicate to the recipient(s)
- How you determined if the revelation was well received or not
- Any insight or impact that you gained through being the prophetic minister in this scenario

Share a testimony of when you experienced an upward prophetic function. Make sure to include:

- How the revelation came to you and what God revealed about Himself
- How this revelation impacted you and your relationship with God
- An example in scripture that you can use for meditation where God unveils this same truth or attribute of Himself (cite your verse references)

Prompt #3 - Giving and Receiving Prophetic Revelation

Read through Genesis 37 and consider how Joseph communicates his dreams to his family and how they receive the revelation.

- What motive do you believe empowered Joseph's choice to communicate the revelation he received? Identify who he was seeking to serve with his gift.

- Discuss how Joseph related to the authority structure he found himself in among his family. Explain how this impacted his favor and the favor shown to his revelation.
- Use scripture references to support your answers.

Read through Genesis 41 and consider how Joseph communicates the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream and how Pharaoh receives this revelation.

- What motive do you believe empowered Joseph's choice to communicate the revelation he received? Identify who he was seeking to serve with his gift.
- Discuss how Joseph related to people who were in positions of authority within Egypt. Explain how this impacted his favor and the favor shown to his revelation.
- Use scripture references to support your answers.

Imagine you are preparing to give young Joseph a pep talk on protocols for giving and receiving prophetic words. What are two additional pieces of advice from this module that you would remind him of before he speaks to his family?

Essay P1M4

Prompt #1 - Activating Imagination with the Ignatian Method of Prayer

Practice the Ignatian Method of Prayer by meditating upon a portion of John 13.

Choose one of the scenes within the chapter and visualize yourself within it. Allow yourself to imagine interacting with Jesus and the disciples. Then, write an essay describing your experience in detail as if you were retelling the story to a friend.

Make sure the description of your meditation includes the following components:

- Identify which story from John 13 you entered into. This could be:
 - Jesus washing his disciples' feet
 - Jesus confiding about his betrayal at the Last Supper
 - Jesus giving a new commandment and prophesying Peter's denial
- Engage all five senses as you imagine yourself within the scene
 - What do you see? (How do objects, clothing colors, lighting, and the actions you observe affect the mood of your experience?)
 - What do you hear? (Is there something you imagine Jesus is saying to you? Are the disciples speaking to you or amongst themselves? What are they saying? What does your internal dialogue sound like?)
 - What do you feel? (Are you touching anyone? Is Jesus touching you? Is something in your hands? Are you warm, cold, comforted, nervous? How are your emotions being stirred?)

- What do you smell? (Is there a fragrance in the room or as you step outside? Can you smell the bread or wine at the table, or the feet of the disciples as sandals are being taken off?)
- What do you taste? (Can you taste what you smell? Are you eating something? Is there a flavor that marks the experience or reminds you of something in the past?)

After describing what you imagined, reflect on this method of prayer:

- Which portion of your experience within the scene ministered to you the most?
- Is engaging your imagination easy or difficult for you? Do you feel that the Ignatian Method of Prayer is a helpful practice for you?
- At any point in the exercise, did you move from imagination into revelation?
 - This could be a moment of inner healing, encouragement, or a thought brought to light that you want to explore further with God, etc

Share any additional insights you gained from the exercise

Prompt #2 - Categorizing and Responding to Dreams

Share a personal dream you have received and how you responded to it

- Which type of dream would you classify it under, and why?
- Unfold any metaphorical symbolism, interpretation, or additional types of revelation you had within the dream
- What was the overarching message of the dream?
- How did you respond to God after the dream? Is there anything you wish you would have done differently in your response that you gathered from this module?
- Did you learn a lesson or receive wisdom from this experience that could be helpful for others to know too?

Analyze your favorite biblical account of someone having a revelatory dream

- Give the verse references for the passage and identify the people or beings involved in the dream
- Which type of dream would you classify this example under, and why?
- Which forms of revelation are being displayed within the dream?
(Metaphorical language, visitation, words of warning, wisdom, prophecy, etc)
- What does this dream reveal about the nature of God to its receiver?
- Why do you connect to this dream more than the other examples in scripture?

Prompt #3 - Meditating on Angelic Encounters in Scripture

Select one biblical passage involving an angel to study and meditate upon. Cite the scriptures referenced.

- Identify which type of angelic being is present in the passage
- Describe any characteristics of the angel from the text
 - Its visible form, how it moves or appears/ disappears, any special abilities, or revealed personality
- What message does the angel communicate? Is the message verbal or communicated through the angel's actions?
- Consider the human involved in the angelic encounter. What was he or she doing as the angel was revealed? Do you believe the person attracted this encounter in any way?
- How does the human respond to the angel?
- After learning about engaging the angelic, do you believe this was a wise response? Is there a better response the human could have had?
- Why did you choose this passage to analyze? Is there a specific portion of this passage that is highlighted to you?

Essay P1M5

Prompt #1 - Interpreting Elements in the Context of their Audience

Explore the multiple meanings that one element (the Bronze Serpent) has symbolized to its various audiences throughout biblical history:

- What did Moses' crafting of the Bronze Serpent intend to communicate to the Israelites in the wilderness? (Numbers 21)
- What did Hezekiah's destruction of the Bronze Serpent communicate to the Kingdom of Judah during the time of his reign? (2 Kings 18)
- What did Jesus' reference to the Bronze Serpent communicate to his disciples and Nicodemus in the first century? (John 3)

Consider various cultures and people groups you are familiar with in modern day:

- What is one example of an element that is interpreted as a positive symbol by one community and yet negative by another community?
 - No dragons or cows. Use an example John Thomas did not reference in this module.

Give a personal example of how one dream element has symbolized more than one meaning for you in two different scenarios.

Prompt #2 - Recognizing Dream Elements & Assigning Significance

After learning about common dream elements and their meanings, pick (3) elements that you have experienced as recurring symbols in your dream life.

- What do each of these elements symbolize for you?
- Give a short description of how you have seen each element appear in the context of a dream.
- *Example: For me, the element of hair represents different anointings. Once, God spoke a phrase to me in a dream saying, "Keep your hair braided." At that time, I was being given an increase of responsibility and position at my church; I remembered 1 Peter 4:7 - "whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies." God was anointing me with strength (the braid) to serve well. In another dream, a prophet came to me and said my hair was beautiful and the color of salt. I felt God was honoring an anointing for truth (salt purifies and preserves what it touches) that was resting on me.*

Pick one of the dreams you have listed out and identify its:

- Focus
- Sub-focuses
- Details
- Interpretation
- *Example: I was the dream's focus. The prophet and my hair were the sub-focuses. "Beautiful" and "salt" were the details connected to my hair. The interpretation was that God was honoring (calling beautiful) his anointing for truth (salt) that was resting on me.*

Prompt #3 - Stewarding Dreams, Interpretive Skills, and the Soul Encounters in Scripture

Stewarding Dreams:

- Which method do you use to record your dreams and study them? Why does this method suit you best?
- Have you discovered any practice(s) that attract revelation in the form of dreams or visions to you? If so, what happened?
 - This could look like regularly asking God for dreams, honoring testimonies of dreams, studying biblical dreams, listening to live dream interpretations or recordings, asking for impartations from other dreamers, etc.

Stewarding Interpretive Skills:

- Which dream interpretation resource or practice has most positively impacted your interpretation skills? How have you measured your growth over time?

Stewarding the Soul:

- As you have interpreted dreams, what strongholds have you recognized within your own soul and how did you realize the stronghold was there?
- How have you identified strongholds in your ministry partner(s) while interpreting dreams as a team?

Reminder - Strongholds can be positive or negative. This can be a pattern of thinking, feeling, strong opinions, or even a “bent” towards a specific gifting that becomes a filter on our revelation

Essay P1M6

Prompt #1 - Using the Five Keys to Unlock an Emotionally Healthy Prophetic Life

Briefly explain the Five Keys and reflect on how you are integrating each of them into your life:

- **Key 1 - Looking Beneath the Surface**
 - Explain why this is necessary
 - Reflect on the centering prayer exercise John Thomas gave in this lesson. Share 1-2 of the responses you received from God through this prayer. Which emotions did you find it easiest to connect with God through? Which were more difficult?
- **Key 2 - Breaking the Power of the Past**
 - Explain why this is necessary
 - Give an example of a recent “fruit and root” you recognized operating in your soul and how you applied inner healing to break the pattern.
- **Key 3 - Living in Brokenness & Vulnerability**
 - Explain why this is necessary
 - Share a testimony of a time when you chose to embrace vulnerability with another believer and found freedom through it.
- **Key 4 - Receiving the Gift of Limits**
 - Explain why this is necessary
 - Share an experience where you realized that you had a limit that needed to be honored instead of ignored.
- **Key 5 - Embracing Grieving & Loss**
 - Explain why this is necessary
 - What practice(s) have you found to be most helpful for you in processing pain with God? Are you regularly engaging in these practices?

Prompt #2 - Developing A Rule of Life that Embodies the Beatitudes

Meditate on the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-12. These eight blessings from Jesus craft a picture of what a loving and surrendered life looks like from God’s perspective.

Create a rule of life based on the beatitudes that will serve to pull you deeper into Christ's character and apply the skills you've gained from this module.

- For each beatitude, write out one practice you could add to your life and something that you could abstain from.
- In the end, your rule of life should be made up of 16 prescriptive practices.
 - These practices could include spiritual disciplines, developing new skills, finding ways to demonstrate honor towards others, etc.

The Beatitudes:

- 5:3 - "Blessed are the poor in spirit..."
- 5:4 - "Blessed are those who mourn..."
- 5:5 - "Blessed are the gentle (meek)..."
- 5:6 - "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness..."
- 5:7 - "Blessed are the merciful..."
- 5:8 - "Blessed are the pure in heart..."
- 5:9 - "Blessed are the peacemakers..."
- 5:10-12 - "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake..."

Share which beatitude is most highlighted to you. How have you seen Jesus model this beatitude in your own life or in the Scriptures?

Prompt #3 - Striving to Understand Ephesians 4:4

Ephesians 4:4 - "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your calling..."

*Note: This "you" is plural in Greek

An over-emphasis on discovering your individual assignment from God can often undermine the importance of the Church's singular call—to represent Jesus Christ.

Reflect on your own experiences of this in ministry:

- How have you witnessed the exaltation of Self or spiritual elitism in the Church?
 - Which gift was being exalted to the detriment of all the others?

- Describe your most defining experience of Christian unity.
 - How did you witness Christians with different graces work together to reveal Christ in this scenario?
 - Was this a spontaneous gathering or an organized event?
 - What type of ministry was taking place, and how did you determine it was fruitful?

Discuss how prophets and prophetic people need the other four graces of Christ to become mature and well-rounded:

- What are ways that the apostle, evangelist, teacher, and pastor can positively influence a prophet or prophetic person to reveal a fuller expression of Jesus?