

## **Bibliography On Spiritual Formation**

Bernard of Clairvaux. *The Love Of God*. Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1983.

This work includes the eleventh-century monk's classic presentation on the nature of divine love and the importance of loving God in life. His outline of the four degrees of love, which is part of this treatise, is now widely known and seen as insightful and foundational to mystical literature.

Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God; The Tree of Life; and The Life of Saint Francis*. New York: Paulist Press, 1978.

These three works, found in this one volume, are seen as the heart of Bonaventure's literary contribution to mystical literature. *The Soul's Journey Into God* contains his understanding of the stages of contemplation as reflected in the created world. *The Tree of Life* is a meditation on the person of Christ as seen in the gospel accounts, portraying the beauty and wonder of the Lord, who alone is worthy of devotion. *The Life of Saint Francis* was the official biography commissioned by the Franciscan Order in the mid-thirteenth century.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*. New York: Harper and Row, 1954.

This is a treatment on true Christian community, made possible by the grace of Christ. The author argues that being in right relationship with others is only possible through the work of Christ. Christians, according to Bonhoeffer, are a gathering of imperfect people sustained in unity through the grace and mercy of the Lord.

Brother Lawrence. *The Practice of the Presence of God*. New York: Doubleday, 1977.

Brother Lawrence was a very common man who knew the way to experience a very uncommon walk with God. He set about to live every moment of his life, regardless of the context, aware of the presence of God and to respond accordingly. He desired to be in a constant state of communion, which would move him to new depths of spirituality. This is a collection of letters and notes from the seventeenth century Carmelite lay brother that reflect and advise that pursuit. It is undoubtedly a classic of Christian literature.

de Caussade, Jean Pierre. *The Sacrament Of The Present Moment*. New York: Harper Collins, 1989.

Writing in the eighteenth century, the author calls the reader to find God in every moment of life by entering into the disciplines of contemplation, self-abandonment, and joy regardless of the circumstance. This work is a classic and speaks to our contemporary obsession to avoid pain and discomfort at all costs. De Caussade challenges the reader to find God in the dark moments of life and to surrender to the purging and purification that such times offer. He encourages the reader to lean into the loving purposes of God displayed in all that He brings him or her in life.

De Waal, Esther. *Seeking God: The Way of St. Benedict*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1984.

This small book provides insight into the Rule of St. Benedict, applying it to life in the modern world. De Waal has gleaned from extensive writings and offers the essentials of the Rule for the common pilgrim as a pattern for embracing life.

Edwards, Jonathan. *Religious Affections*. Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1990.

In this work, the key figure of the Great Awakening seeks to identify the “affections” of true faith that are genuinely produced by the presence of the Holy Spirit within the Christian’s life. This work is essentially a theology of experiential renewal and spirituality in response to the events of his time. Edwards argues that the inner passions, or affections, of a person move a him or her to embrace the way of faith. His insights have been referred to as a standard for informing renewal and revival by every Christian movement since his time.

Fenelon, Francois. *The Seeking Heart*. Beaumont, TX: Seed Sowers, 1992.

This book begins with a short, yet important biography of the late archbishop’s life. *The Seeking Heart* is a collection of letters and writings that focus on the place of suffering and pain in Christian experience, as well as the essentials of following after Christ in radical discipleship. Fenelon’s insights are fresh and contemporary, though penned almost three hundred years ago. His writings have served people over the centuries, helping them grow in a deeper experience of the Christ-life.

Fenelon, Francois. *Let Go*. Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1973.

This short work is a collection of letters written by Fenelon to provide encouragement and direction to people living in an immoral and decadent culture. His insights on the spiritual journey are still fresh and instructive after three hundred years.

Foster, Richard. *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1992.

Foster provides a thorough-going treatment of prayer, linking the discipline to the journey into spirituality. He covers concepts of prayer often ignored in popular volumes, including such topics as, “the prayer of relinquishment,” “formative prayer,” and “the prayer of abandonment.” His sensitivity to the disciplines of spiritual formation is reflected in this volume, making it a valuable resource for the serious seeker.

Foster, Richard. *Celebration of Discipline*. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1978, 1988.

This is an introductory volume to the disciplines of formative spirituality. Foster rightly presents them as the means of grace made available to the believer as potential channels of God's presence. He emphasizes that while these traditional disciplines position the seeker for God's touch, they are powerless in themselves. His treatment is faithful to the literature of spirituality, yet practical to the contemporary reader.

Foster, Richard, and James Bryan Smith. *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings For Individuals and Groups*. New York: Harper Collins, 1993.

A collection of readings from the classics of spiritual literature down through the centuries, this book is divided into sections: “Preparing for the Spiritual Life,” “The Prayer-Filled Life,” “The Victorious Life,” “The Spirit-Empowered Life,” “The Compassionate Life,” and “The Word Centered Life.” Readings have been selected that are faithful to these themes, followed by reflection questions and suggested exercises. This volume is a valuable introduction to contemplative and devotional literature.

Guyon, Jeanne. *Experiencing The Depths of Jesus Christ*. Beaumont, TX: Seed Sowers, 1975.

Madame Guyon is recognized as one of the most influential women in Christian history. She sought to introduce people to an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, emphasizing that such a walk was normative for all believers, not relegated to clergy alone. Her teachings were enthusiastically accepted by the common people, yet they caused her imprisonment by the religious and political leaders of her day. This work is a classic of mystical Christian literature and a helpful guide to the seeker hungry for more of the Lord.

Guyon, Jeanne. *Guyon Speaks Again*. Beaumont, TX: Seed Sowers, 1984.

A collection of letters from the eighteenth-century mystic, this work provides rich insight and spiritual direction on such topics as failure, discouragement, persecution, sorrow, and embarrassment, to name a few. Her advice, shared three centuries ago, holds great truth and counsel for the contemporary Christian experience.

Hallesby, Ole. *Prayer*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1994.

Hallesby was one of Norway's leading Christian teachers of the twentieth century. This work is a classic on prayer that addresses the essentials of this discipline with theological depth and insight. A school of prayer (in a single volume) written in a spirit of love, grace, and intimacy, it carries the reader along toward God's presence and is full of rich insights and spiritual direction regarding the life of prayer.

Julian Of Norwich. *Showings*. New York: Paulist Press, 1978.

Part of the “Classics of Western Spirituality” series, *Showings* is the description of revelations received by Julian of Norwich in the fourteenth century. She describes graphic visions of the incarnate Christ that revealed the greatness and expanse of divine love to her. There are sixteen “showings,” or revelations in all, giving particular insight into the feminine side of God, as understood by Julian. This work is certainly a classic of Catholic mystical spirituality.

Kelly, Thomas R. *A Testament Of Devotion*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.

Thomas Kelly, writing from the Quaker tradition, points the way to a deeper and richer encounter with God along a pathway of an unhurried existence of serenity and peace, calling people to enter the deep Center of living where communion with the Divine truly takes place. This short work is a devotional classic and helps the reader clear away the noise of the distracted life in order to see and experience the Holy in the common places of life.

Lane, George. *Christian Spirituality: An Historical Sketch*. Chicago, IL: Loyola University Press, 1984.

This is a brief history of the major movements in Christian spirituality over the centuries. Lane endeavors to tie the variant expressions to the common theme of “longing to seek for more of God.” He moves from the unstructured-flight into the desert during the fourth century, to the more rigorous and defined experiences of the monastic rule. He ends the work by discussing the essential ingredients of spirituality that developed throughout history.

Law, William. *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. New York: Paulist Press, 1978.

In this work, the eighteenth century Anglican calls the readers to a life of disciplined obedience as a pathway toward inner transformation by the Holy Spirit. Law's spiritual direction is, as the title suggests, serious, yet also simple and practical. His writing had a great impact on the Christian community of his day, and has been seen as a classic approach to uniting the spiritual and the mundane as essential to health and growth.

Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity*. New York: Macmillan, 1952.

This is Lewis' masterful defense of the Christian faith. Originally given as a series of radio broadcasts, this small volume has long been a must-read for seeker and saint alike. His reasoned treatment of Christian beliefs provides a solid apologetic for the Christian way.

Merton, Thomas. *No Man Is An Island*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich Publishers, 1983.

Merton maintains that life apart from the Spirit is empty and deceptive. He provides a collection of sixteen essays that help the reader find those meanings and values that will bring depth and fulfillment to life. He points the reader to the Spirit life as the only way to experience God and touch the ultimate reality of life as it is truly meant to be lived and experienced.

Merton, Thomas. *The Wisdom of The Desert*. New York: New Directions Publishing, 1970.

In *The Wisdom of the Desert*, Merton provides a collection of sayings from the Desert Fathers of the fourth century. The emphasis is upon the essentials of solitude and contemplation and the basic thoughts of these first hermits and cenobites. The reader can sense the simple, yet profound devotion of the Fathers and their commitment to embrace God above all things.

Merton, Thomas. *Contemplative Prayer*. New York: Doubleday, 1990.

Merton combines Scripture and the teachings of western mystics to guide the reader into the heart of the contemplative life. He writes in a way that brings these truths to the reader in contemporary and practical ways, making applications from life in the twentieth century. As with his other books, Merton seeks to root people in true reality by connecting them with the way of contemplation.

Merton, Thomas. *The Silent Life*. New York: The Noonday Press, 1956.

Merton seeks to provide clear insight into the essentials of the monastic way of life, rehearsing forms and structures of this expression of Christianity in a way that defends it as a valid pathway to know and experience intimacy and union with God.

Molinos, Michael. *The Spiritual Guide*. Beaumont, TX: Seed Sowers, 1982.

Written in the seventeenth century, this controversial book was produced as a call to reform in the Roman Catholic Church. Molinos, a priest, wrote that a deeper, more personal experience of Christ was available to Christians, and he devoted a large portion of the book to the way of the cross and suffering. Molinos's work aroused a great following among lay people, but caused him to be imprisoned for life and the book to be burned. While not all that Molinos says is balanced, it does provide valuable insights on the place of suffering in perfecting God's people.

Mulholland, Robert. *Shaped By The Word*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room, 1985.

Mulholland begins by arguing that an informational approach to reading God's word does little to transform the reader. He then offers an alternative formational model that is consistent with the history of formative spirituality. His insights and directions regarding this process are simple, practical and effective. He enlightens the reader to disciplines that will open the way for an encounter with God through His word, as opposed to the traditional information-gathering model so prevalent in the educational process today.

Mulholland, Robert. *Invitation to A Journey: A Road Map For Spiritual Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary, Mulholland provides an excellent introduction to the topic of spiritual formation. He carefully defines the process and provides a clear review of classical disciplines necessary to the journey. His treatment is Biblical and practical.

Nouwen, Henri J.M. *Making All Things New*. New York: Harper Collins, 1981.

Nouwen calls the reader away from the noise of the distracted life, to embrace solitude and community as meaningful pathways to spiritual depth and maturity. He equips the reader to say "yes" to the presence of God deep within his or her life, following the spiritual hunger to its divine center.

Nouwen, Henri J.M. *Lifesigns: Intimacy, Fecundity, and Ecstasy In Christian Perspective*. New York: Image Books, 1990.

In this book, Nouwen examines three critical aspects of the Christian life. He bases his thoughts on the Gospel of John, chapter fifteen, inviting believers into a life of communion with God, fruitfulness and the fullness of joy. In each treatment, the author beckons the reader to leave "the house of fear," and to come home again to "the father's house of love."

Nouwen, Henri J.M. *The Inner Voice Of Love*. New York: Doubleday, 1996.

Published posthumously, this collection of journal entries from Nouwen's own dark night of the soul provides depth and understanding to the periods of pain and seasons of sufferings common to life. It will bring hope and encouragement to anyone battling loss, difficulty and trial. Nouwen invites readers to move through the darkness of deep anguish to the freedom that is theirs in the Father's embrace of love.

Nouwen, Henri J.M. *Reaching Out: Three Movements Of The Spiritual Life*. New York: Image Books, 1986.

This book is about movement toward union with God through three stages: self-awareness, sensitivity to other people, and intimate relationship with God. Nouwen offers no quick-fix spirituality, but instead calls the reader to move from loneliness to solitude (stage one), hostility to hospitality (stage two), and illusion to prayer (stage three). His insights into the path of spirituality bring direction and hope to the person hungry to know and experience more of God.

Saint John of The Cross. *Dark Night of the Soul*. New York: Image Books, 1990.

Written by the sixteenth-century Spanish Carmelite monk, this volume was produced during his confinement, which came as a result of his work to reform the Catholic Church. It is a classic on the place of suffering as an integral part of the spiritual journey. He encouraged readers to embrace the dark night as a tool of God's purging and perfecting, a concept that has become an important part of the literature of formative spirituality.

Talbot, John Michael. *The Lessons of St. Francis: How to Bring Simplicity and Spirituality into Your Daily Life*. New York: Dutton, 1997.

The author presents the reader with a sound guide to spirituality by using the teachings of St. Francis. His style is artistically-appealing, as well as thoroughly practical. He discusses basic disciplines of spiritual formation, providing a helpful guide at the end of each chapter. He interweaves contemporary and traditional literature in his treatment, while focusing primarily upon the contribution St. Francis has made to the way of contemplation and spiritual life.

Theresa of Avila. *The Interior Castle*. New York: Paulist Press, 1979.

This book describes and defines the vision that Theresa, a Carmelite nun of the sixteenth century, had, in which she saw a magnificent crystal castle that had many rooms. Each dwelling or room moved closer to the central place where the Lord could be experienced in great splendor. She employs the use of allegory to instruct the reader on the nature of the spiritual journey toward union with God. As with her other writings, this work is a call to the contemplative life.

Tozer, A. W. *The Pursuit of God*. Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications Inc., 1982.

Tozer, often called the “twentieth-century mystic,” begins this volume by discussing what he saw as a tension between what people really longed for in spirituality and what most churches were providing. He believed that people were hungry for more of God and yet churches were offering Bible knowledge instead of a pathway to His presence. He goes on to provide that pathway, challenging the reader to find God as the Treasure that satisfies above all else. This work has become a modern classic in the literature of spirituality.

Tuoti, Frank X., *Why Not Be A Mystic*. New York: Crossroads Publishing, 1995.

A Former Trappist monk, Tuoti presents a practical and readable introduction to the traditional teachings of Christian Mysticism. Influenced by fellow Trappist Thomas Merton, Tuoti shares the fundamentals of the contemplative life, showing the reader the process of purging and purification essential to transforming union with the Father. He draws from the mystical teachers of the past and presents their insights in a way every Christian seeker can understand and embrace.

Underhill, Evelyn. *The Spiritual Life*. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1955.

Underhill writes about simple, yet profound truths that can impact a person's spiritual development. This is a short work that provides valuable insights into deep spiritual truths in a practical and understandable way for all people.

Van Kaam, Adrian. *Spirituality and the Gentle Life*. Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1974.

Van Kaam, a Roman Catholic priest, has long been committed to the ministry of spiritual direction and the study of spirituality. In this work, he seeks to show the relationship between experiencing the Presence of God and gentleness. He argues that gentleness is a virtue that can make the seeker more conscious of His presence, and as such, the author gives instruction on embracing that virtue as a way of life. His writings are faithful to the contemplative expressions of formative spirituality.

Weatherhead, Leslie D. *The Transforming Friendship*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990.

Weatherhead defines the essence of Christianity as an intimate friendship with Christ that transforms all of life. He argues that accepting the reality of this friendship is the starting place of the Christian experience, and that the display of that friendship attracts others to want friendship with Christ for themselves. He instructs believers to experience that friendship in the relationships they have with others.

Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. New York: Harper and Row, 1988.

The central tenant of this book is Willard's admonition that to be like Jesus one must embrace His entire lifestyle, public and private. He argues that the public ministry of Jesus grew out of his private commitment to spiritual disciplines. He then introduces those disciplines to the reader as a means of making room for God to speak and work deep within. His presentation provides a sound philosophical base for adopting the lifestyle necessary to healthy spiritual formation.