

# **FP 101 Spiritual Formation**



**Student Coursebook  
Nazarene Theological Institute**

**--Note to students and teachers—**

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**FP 101 SPIRITUAL FORMATION**  
Diploma and Certificate Level  
Syllabus

**Course Professors**

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**Course Description**

How should a minister lead a life of intimacy with God? This course responds to this basic question. It is important to understand that a life given in service according to God's calling requires a discipline in the spiritual life as much as in one's professional life.

**Course Rationale**

*Narration*

The apostle Paul in addressing the Ephesians defined the role of prophets, evangelists, ministers and teachers in these terms: ". . . the perfection of the saints (Eph 4:11-12). If the minister is assigned to the work of perfecting the saints, it is necessary to have a well-disciplined life. Ministers must lead believers in a way that teaches them how to be instructed by God's word that accomplishes each day a transformation of the heart. God's instruction breaks down the pride that sometimes arises from the education we receive through our family background or in school and university education. God remodels the Christian. He remakes the Christian and gives them a godly disposition only made possible through the spiritual disciplines, namely prayer, meditation, and intercession, study, fasting, etc. The minister must learn to submit themselves to the disciplines of a spiritual life and teach other believers how to do so.

*Program Outcomes*

The following program outcomes assigned to this module are identifiable competencies required of the student in this course.

CN 5 Knowledge of the biblical, theological, and practical implications of holiness doctrine when taught from a Wesleyan perspective

CN 10 knowledge of the basic theory and art of communication, especially that which concerns preaching and teaching

CP 4 the ability to teach the Word of God and make disciples that can make other disciples

CP 5 the ability to plan and lead worship services]

CP 13 the ability to organize and promote Christian education

CR 1 Ability to give value to Christian morality and how to apply this ethic to life.

CR 3 Ability to worship God by using personal and public means of grace.

CR 4 ability to allow Christ's character to form the attitudes and actions of one's daily life.

CR 12 Ability to exert self-control.

CR 13 Ability to live the experience of entire sanctification.

CX 2 Ability to understand the context within which he or she lives with objectivity

*Course Outcomes*

At the end of the course the student will be able to demonstrate the following goals:

1. Students must have a complete understanding of the key concept of spiritual formation and be able to communicate verbally and visually in a local church (CN 5; CR 13)
2. Students must have a life of prayer in order to assume the responsibilities of a pastor (CN 10+; CP 4+; CP 5+; CP 13+; CX 2)
3. Students must regularly meditate on God's Word as a regular part of their daily lives (CR 1, CR 3+; CR 4; CR 12)
4. Students must acquire the quality of an intercessor, pleading on behalf of the lost, sick, and the demon-possessed. (CN 5+; CR 4+; CX 2)
5. Students will find how to fast and pray and discover an aid in combatting excessive forms of appetite and covetousness. (CR 12; CX 2)
6. The student will be accountable for taking up the cross of Jesus as a disciple (CR1; CR 4).

The following sessions and exercises of this course offer the following percentages of the four Cs:

Content	25%
Competency	15%
Character	45%
Context	15%

### Course Resources

Tracy, Wesley, Dee Freeborn, Morris Weigelt, Janine Tartaglia-Metcalf. *The Upward Call*. Nazarene Publishing House, 1993.

Other suggested books for further learning†:

1. Richard Foster. *Celebration of Discipline*. 1998
2. Andrew Murray. *The Inner Life*. (1984)
4. Bible

Les auteurs du cours vont prendre leur présentation à partir d'autres livres, y compris

1. Ralph SHALLIS. *From Now On*. (2006)
2. Paul YONGGHI CHO. *La prière, clé du réveil*. Editions Vida (USA)
3. Jack W. Hayford, *Prayer is invading the impossible* (2002)

### Course Requirements and Evaluations

1. This course can be taught in English, French, or a local dialect in a one-week intensive or during one month with two or three meetings per week.
2. Class attendance, attention and participation are especially important – students must be present and on time. If two or more classes are missed, the student will be required to repeat the course.
3. Small group dynamics – Nothing is more important in this course than the small group work. The class members will be assigned to small groups of three or four students each. The group members will serve as study partners for many group explorations and discussion throughout the course. The small group will give a summary of every lesson and apply it to pastoral ministry at the end of every lesson (course outcome 1,3, & 4).
4. Each student should keep a *Les exercices* consistent, pour chaque étudiant, d'ouvrir un carnet et d'y inscrire au fil des cours son programme de prières quotidiennes, les différents éléments de sa méditation quotidienne, ses sujets d'intercession. Ce carnet sera soumis chaque semaine à l'évaluation du professeur (objectifs 2, 4)
5. The teacher will carefully observe the small groups, noting the competence of reports, balance of discussion and the achievement of assigned tasks. The results will be placed in a personal portfolio (see below) that will follow students in their progress through the course of study.
6. Students must bring a Bible to each class session.
7. The class exercises consist of scripture memorization, leading devotionals, organizing a special service (e.g. Wedding, Lord's Supper, etc.), and prayer sessions which include different elements of daily meditation and requests for intercessory prayer (course outcomes 2,4,6).
8. Students will be introduced to fasting and prayer as spiritual disciplines (course outcomes 4 & 5).

9. Each student will be asked to do a 15 minute presentation in class at the end of the course (course outcome 1)
10. There will be no examination.

### **Course Schedule**

Session 1: Introduction; What Is a Disciple?

Session 2: Inner Transformation

Session 3: Walking with God

Session 4: Resources for the Walk—*Worship*

Session 5: Resources for the Walk—*Prayer, Meditation, Fasting*

Session 6: Companions for the Christian Journey

Session 7: Ways to Serve Others on the Journey

Appendix: Covenant of Christian Conduct

### **Personal Portfolio**

Students will have a record of their progress, examples of work completed, course grades, and other important or notable information that will follow them through the course of study. A simple dossier maintained by the District Ministerial Studies Board or District Advisory Board will suffice.

## Session 1a: Introduction

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*Description of this session:*

- 1. In this lesson, the instructor will introduce some basic ideas about the Christian life and spiritual formation. There are several questions from this presentation that are given below to which you must offer a response. The instructor will review your responses.*
- 2. After the initial presentation, you will work in group with the goal of becoming a means of grace in that you mutually encourage and support one another in your life and ministry. In this first section, you will see that the groups will be actively engaged in several activities.*
- 3. The session introduces a list of verses to memorize. You will need to memorize these verses and practice them throughout the course until you know them by heart.*
- 4. Finally, this session will introduce a "Spiritual Formation Covenant" regarding your relationship with God and your commitment to growing spiritually.*

Presentation to the Course Introduction

### QUESTIONS

1. *What are the two works of grace?*

What is the first work of grace called?

Explain the following words:

**Regeneration**

**Justification**

**Adoption**

What does God do in our lives through the second work of grace?

2. What is the goal of spiritual formation?

## Spiritual Formation Covenant

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand the importance of the expectation Jesus Christ has upon me to be His disciple, to enter into a covenant with God to continually seek my contribution to do what is necessary to live a life that reflects more and more the image of Christ, in my character, my attitude, and all other areas of my life in service to the Church, and willful obedience to God.

I commit to the following:

1. to follow continuing education programs on basic issues of discipleship and ministry knowing that it is the Lord that wants to make me into His disciple and an effective servant;
2. to evaluate on a regular basis my progress as a disciple;
3. to meditate on the word of God, pray daily, and fast regularly;
4. to participate actively in a peer group for mutual spiritual encouragement and support.
5. to stay faithful to the Lord and His call despite what He might permit or send into my life knowing that He loves me and works in all things for my well-being in my personal growth and in the work to which He has called me.

Place \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

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Place \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

## **Session 1a, Small Group Work**

1. If the group members do not yet know each other, make time for them to introduce themselves with a brief testimony of their call to ministry.
2. Each one should respond to the following question: "What do I expect to happen in this course that will help me grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ?" After responding, they should discuss their responses with one another.
3. Read together Colossians 1:15-23. Note the two sides of the image of God found in Christ, the sole Head of the Church: head of the body, and the firstborn. Which one of these images best describes the model of discipleship we need to follow as we grow into Christlikeness? (The response is your opinion and may differ from others.) In your context, how is this image of the firstborn or head usually described?
4. Read together Ephesians 4:1-15. Think about how you could teach a series of Sunday School lessons or weekly Bible studies from this passage. Indicate how many lesson/studies are found in this passage as well as a title for each one and the verses covered by each lesson/study. List an objective and the main points for each lesson/study. The group will share this information with the rest of the class before the third session.

## **Session 1a, Memory Verses**

Romans 12.1-2

Ephesians 4.14-15



## DISCUSSION AFTER THE PRESENTATION

Be prepared to discuss the following subjects presented by the instructor.

### **Session 1b: Small Group Work**

#### Questions from this session

1. What contribution did the Biblical verses that you read in preparing for this session have toward your understanding of what it means to be a disciple?
2. Give an example from your past where it was difficult to obey the Lord.
3. What have you learned about the meaning of the "image of Christ"?

## FINISH PREPARING THE BIBLE STUDIES OR SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON FROM EPHESIANS 4:1-15

### **Assignments for the next session**

1. Begin your prayer journal. See assignment 4 in the syllabus for instructions. From the next meeting, there will be some tasks that involve this journal.

a. Write your concerns, difficulties and doubts about the image of Christ upon which you must reflect and offer up as prayer requests to ask God to help you better understand.

b. Read Psalms 23, 24, and 25. If there are several days between sessions, read each of these psalms every day. Write down your reflections upon these psalms after each reading. Note the particular verses that speak to you about your personal life and ministry.

c. It is necessary to allow the instructor to read through your journal entries during the next session.

2. Read Covenant of Christian Conduct from the *Manual* for the Church of the Nazarene, paragraphs 33 to 41 (found in the Appendix of this course handbook). Reflect upon how some of these paragraphs discuss issues similar to or different from your experience and context. What principles will it be necessary to keep and then contextualize into your culture and experience?

### **Memory Verses**

1 Peter 2.20b-21

Colossians 3.17

1 John 2.6

### **Supplementary Reading**

If the instructor has given supplementary reading, it is necessary to read it by the beginning of the next session.

## **Session 2: Inner Transformation**

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### THIS SESSION WILL INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING

*Activity 1:* The small groups will present the results of their discussions and prepare for the lessons/studies on Ephesians 4:1-15.

*Activity 2:* Recite the memory verses (Rom. 12:1-2, Eph. 4:14-15), as well as know the context of these verses.

*Activity 3:* Discussion in small groups on the *Covenant of Christian Conduct* found in the Appendix.

### PRESENTATION OF THE INSTRUCTOR: INNER TRANSFORMATION

Questions to guide the students during the presentation

1. What is the goal of the spiritual "crises" that were introduced in session 1?
2. Cite illustrations from the Bible uses to describe spiritual growth.
3. Define the grace of God. What relationship is there between the grace of God and spiritual formation?
4. Why is an intimate relationship with Christ so important?
5. How can we nurture and take care of this relationship?

*Activity 4:* In small groups discuss the relationship between the memory verse and today's presentation. How do these verses help us understand the concept of inner transformation?

ASSIGNMENTS TO HELP US PREPARE FOR THE NEXT SESSION:

Prepare for the next session by reading the following verses:

Phil. 3.12-14; 1 Cor. 9.24-27; Col. 3.23-25 ; 1 Tim. 4.12; Gen. 3.8-9, Gen 17.1,  
Gen 28.16-17 Joshua 1.1-9.

Continue to write reflections in your prayer journal.

Read any articles or assigned reading if any.

## Session 3—Walking with God

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### Questions from the Presentation

1. Why doesn't the Bible teach us how to practice the disciplines of spiritual formation?
2. What is the central concern of spiritual formation?
3. In your own words describe how the Old Testament describes the call of God into an intimate relationship with Him?
4. **Personal Reflection:** In this presentation, the instructor used the phrase: "His love is a reflection of the love of the Father" in talking about Jesus. How does this phrase and the others that followed help us in thinking about the "image of Christ"?

## **Small Group Work**

Read the following passages that talk about the theme of God in His love searching for lost sinner to enter into a redemptive relationship with them. Discuss each passage independently as well as the common elements found in all the passages taken together.

Gal 3.1 – 4.7 (especially 3.24-29 et 4.4-7) ; Phil. 2.5-11; Eph. 2.1-21.

Respond in particular to the following question: What changes are necessary in the relationship between myself and the Holy Spirit in order for my life to reflect the principles found in these passages.

## **Memory Verses**

John 17.17-19

Galatians 2.20

### ASSIGNMENTS TO HELP US PREPARE FOR THE NEXT SESSION:

Read the supplementary reading if any.

Read the following biblical passages and reflect on them:

Ps 139.23-24 ; John 4.23-26 ; Heb 4.12-13, Heb 10. 25 ;

Ps 63.2 ; Rom 12.1- 9a.

Continue to write down your reflections, thoughts, requests, and thanks to God in your prayer journal.



## Small Group Work

Study together the proposed order of service for a worship service. Reflect on how the principle elements of worship are met throughout the service. Do not be afraid to make improvements where needed.

Use the following questions to guide your discussion.

1. How many of the 15 parts of the worship service are essential and how many are optional?
2. Of these 15 parts, what are the most important ones for a service in which those attending will be invited to seek entire sanctification?
3. Offer three ways of giving an offering in a worship service giving each person attending the possibility to participate. Which one of these ways best reflects the spirit of giving according to the essential principles of worship?
4. What might happen if the pastor gives the message near the beginning of the service rather than the end? Are there some subjects that are better dealt with earlier in a worship service rather than at the end?

### ***Add these subjects to the discussion if time allows:***

*Many churches desire speakers to use a loud voice or even microphones to amplify voices. With this in mind, discuss the following questions:*

1. *What is the true role of amplification in a worship service if any?*
2. *Why would pastors allow amplification so strong that it distorts the pronunciation of words that leads to a misunderstanding of what he or she is trying to speak or sing about?*
3. *How can we use a sound system in our worship services in a way that honors God and allows everyone to worship Him?*
4. *What is the relationship between a sound system and the responsibility of the church to its neighbors?*

### ASSIGNMENTS TO HELP US PREPARE FOR THE NEXT SESSION:

- Complete any supplementary reading
- Read the following passages from the Bible.

<i>1 Thess. 5.16-18</i>	<i>Matt. 6.5-18</i>	<i>Hebrews 10.19-22</i>
<i>Philippians 4.6-7</i>	<i>Luke 11.1-13</i>	<i>Romans 8.26-27</i>
<i>Ephesians 6.18-20</i>	<i>1 John 5.14-15.</i>	<i>Matt. 4.1-11</i>
<i>1 Tim. 2.1-4</i>		
- Continue to write down your reflections in your prayer journal.
- Be prepared to turn in your written Bible study lesson before the next session.

## **Session 5—Resources for the Christian Walk— *Prayer, Meditation, Fasting***

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**Respond to the following questions about the presentation:**

1. What is prayer?
2. Why do we need to pray?
3. What are the obstacles to effective prayer?
4. What is meditation and what role does it play in one's Christian walk?
5. How can we be sure to know and/or find God's will?

Be sure to respond to these questions in small group discussion as well.

ASSIGNMENTS TO HELP US PREPARE FOR THE NEXT SESSION:

1. Read the article as supplementary reading for session 6 (optional).
2. Read Paul's letter to the Galatians in order to reflect upon the dimensions of Christian freedom as well as the works of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit that influence the way we make disciples in the local church.
3. Continue to write down your reflections in the prayer journal. Soon the instructor will need to review it for the final grade.
4. Reflect on the role of small group discussion in this course and the need for companions and confidants in the Christian life.

## **Session 6—Companions for the Christian Journey**

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### ASSIGNMENTS TO SUBMIT TO THE INSTRUCTOR

At the end of this session the instructor will collect the prayer journals and give a grade for the assignment.

### ACTIVITIES TO ACCOMPANY THE SESSION:

The instructor will give instructions for two activities to be completed during this session. The first one is to create your definition of the church using information from this presentation. The second one is to respond to a series of questions about the local church.

The small group will discuss the results of both activities.

### ASSIGNMENTS TO HELP US PREPARE FOR THE NEXT SESSION:

1. Complete any supplementary reading
2. Memorize Matthew 20:28.



4. Why do you think pastoral visits are necessary?

5. What specific instructions would you give to others concerning pastoral visits?

6. What are the five key questions about spiritual growth that Wesley posed to members of his small groups of prayer?

i.

ii.

iii.

iv.

v.

*Activity 2c. Plan of action for Christian servanthood in your place of ministry (Follow the instructions of the instructor).*

ASSIGNMENTS TO HELP US IN THE FUTURE:

- Keep your prayer journal up to date.
- Review the memory verses as well as understand their biblical context.

## Appendix, *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene*

### The Covenant of Christian Conduct Paragraphs 33-41

#### A. The Christian Life

**33.** The church joyfully proclaims the good news that we may be delivered from all sin to a new life in Christ. By the grace of God we Christians are “to put off the old self”—the old patterns of conduct as well as the old carnal mind—and are to “put on the new self”—a new and holy way of life as well as the mind of Christ. (Ephesians 4:17-24)

**33.1.** The Church of the Nazarene purposes to relate timeless biblical principles to contemporary society in such a way that the doctrines and covenants of the church may be known and understood in many lands and within a variety of cultures. We hold that the Ten Commandments, as reaffirmed in the New Testament, constitute the basic Christian ethic and ought to be obeyed in all particulars.

**33.2.** It is further recognized that there is validity in the concept of the collective Christian conscience as illuminated and guided by the Holy Spirit. The Church of the Nazarene, as an international expression of the Body of Christ, acknowledges its responsibility to seek ways to particularize the Christian life so as to lead to a holiness ethic. The historic ethical standards of the church are expressed in part in the following items. They should be followed carefully and conscientiously as guides and helps to holy living. Those who violate the conscience of the church do so at their own peril and to the hurt of the witness of the church. Culturally conditioned adaptations shall be referred to and approved by the Board of General Superintendents.

**33.3.** In listing practices to be avoided we recognize that no catalog, however inclusive, can hope to encompass all forms of evil throughout the world. Therefore it is imperative that our people earnestly seek the aid of the Spirit in cultivating a sensitivity to evil that transcends the mere letter of the law; remembering the admonition: “Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.” (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)

**33.4.** Our leaders and pastors are expected to give strong emphasis in our periodicals and from our pulpits to such fundamental biblical truths as will develop the faculty of discrimination between the evil and the good.

**33.5.** Education is of the utmost importance for the social and spiritual well-being of society. Public schools have a mandate to educate all. They are limited, however, as to their scope and, in fact, are prohibited by court rulings from teaching the basic tenets of Christianity. Nazarene educational organizations and institutions, such as Sunday Schools, schools (birth through secondary), child care centers, adult care centers, colleges, and seminaries, are expected to teach children, youth, and adults biblical principles and ethical standards in such a way that our doctrines may be known. This practice may be instead of or in addition to public schools, which often teach secular humanism and fall short of teaching principles of holy living. The education from public sources should be complemented by holiness teaching in the home. Christians should also be encouraged to work in and with public institutions to witness to and influence these institutions for God’s kingdom. (Matthew 5:13-14)

**34.** We hold specifically that the following practices should be avoided:

**34.1. Entertainments that are subversive of the Christian ethic.** Our people, both as Christian individuals and in Christian family units, should govern themselves by three principles. One is the Christian stewardship of leisure time. A second principle is the recognition of the Christian obligation to apply the highest moral standards of Christian living. Because we are living in a day of great moral

confusion in which we face the potential encroachment of the evils of the day into the sacred precincts of our homes through various avenues such as current literature, radio, television, personal computers, and the Internet, it is essential that the most rigid safeguards be observed to keep our homes from becoming secularized and worldly. However, we hold that entertainment that endorses and encourages holy living and affirms scriptural values should be affirmed and encouraged. We especially encourage our young people to use their gifts in media and the arts to influence positively this pervasive part of culture. The third principle is the obligation to witness against whatever trivializes or blasphemes God, as well as such social evils as violence, sensuality, pornography, profanity, and the occult, as portrayed by and through the commercial entertainment industry in its many forms and to endeavor to bring about the demise of enterprises known to be the purveyors of this kind of entertainment. This would include the avoidance of all types of entertainment ventures and media productions that produce, promote, or feature the violent, the sensual, the pornographic, the profane, or the occultic, or which feature or glamorize the world's philosophy of secularism, sensualism, and materialism and undermine God's standard of holiness of heart and life. This necessitates the teaching and preaching of these moral standards of Christian living, and that our people be taught to use prayerful discernment in continually choosing the "high road" of holy living. We therefore call upon our leaders and pastors to give strong emphasis in our periodicals and from our pulpits to such fundamental truths as will develop the principle of discrimination between the evil and good to be found in these media.

We suggest that the standard given to John Wesley by his mother, namely, "whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things, whatever increases the authority of your body over mind, that thing for you is sin," form the basis for this teaching of discrimination. (Manual 33.2-33.4, 903.12-3.14) (Romans 14:7-13; 1 Corinthians 10:31-33; Ephesians 5:1-18; Philippians 4:8-9; 1 Peter 1:13-17; 2 Peter 1:3-11)

**34.2.** Lotteries and other forms of gambling, whether legal or illegal. The church holds that the final result of these practices is detrimental both to the individual and society. (Matthew 6:24-34; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-11; Hebrews 13:5-6; 1 John 2:15-17)

**34.3.** Membership in oath-bound secret orders or societies. The quasi-religious nature of such organizations dilutes the Christian's commitment, and their secrecy contravenes the Christian's open witness. (1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 2 Corinthians 6:14—7:1; Ephesians 5:11-16; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17)

**34.4.** All forms of dancing that detract from spiritual growth and break down proper moral inhibitions and reserve. (Matthew 22:36-39; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 10:31-33; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 3:1-17)

**34.5.** The use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, or trafficking therein; giving influence to, or voting for, the licensing of places for the sale of the same; using illicit drugs or trafficking therein; using of tobacco in any of its forms, or trafficking therein.

In light of the Holy Scriptures and human experience concerning the ruinous consequences of the use of alcohol as a beverage, and in light of the findings of medical science regarding the detrimental effect of both alcohol and tobacco to the body and mind, as a community of faith committed to the pursuit of a holy life, our position and practice is abstinence rather than moderation. Holy Scripture teaches that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. With loving regard for ourselves and others, we call our people to total abstinence from all intoxicants.

Furthermore, our Christian social responsibility calls us to use any legitimate and legal means to minimize the availability of both beverage alcohol and tobacco to others. The widespread incidence of alcohol abuse in our world demands that we embody a position that stands as a witness to others. (Manual 903.12-3.14) (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29—24:2; Hosea 4:10-11; Habakkuk 2:5; Romans 13:8; 14:15-21; 15:1-2; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:9-12, 19-20; 10:31-33; Galatians 5:13-14, 21; Ephesians 5:18) (Only unfermented wine should be used in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.) (413.11, 427.7, 428.2, 429.1, 802)

**34.6.** The unprescribed use of hallucinogenics, stimulants, and depressants, and the misuse and abuse of regularly prescribed medicines. Only on competent medical advice and under medical supervision should such drugs be used. (Matthew 22:37-39; 27:34; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 9:24-27)

## **B. Marriage and Divorce and/or Dissolution of Marriage**

(The meaning of divorce in this rule shall include "dissolution of marriage" when it is used as a legal substitute for divorce.)

**35.** The Christian family, knit together in a common bond through Jesus Christ, is a circle of love, fellowship, and worship to be earnestly cultivated in a society in which family ties are easily dissolved. We urge upon the ministry and congregations of our church such teachings and practices as will strengthen and develop family ties. In particular, we urge upon the ministry the importance of teaching and preaching clearly the biblical plan of the permanence of marriage. The institution of marriage was ordained by God in the time of man's innocence, and is, according to apostolic authority, "honorable in all;" it is the mutual union of one man and one woman for fellowship, helpfulness, and the propagation of the race. Our people should cherish this sacred estate as becomes Christians, and should enter it only after earnest prayer for divine direction, and when assured that the contemplated union is in accordance with scriptural requirements.

They should seek earnestly the blessings that God has ordained in connection with the wedded state, namely, holy companionship, parenthood, and mutual love—the elements of home building. The marriage covenant is morally binding so long as both shall live, and breaking of it is a breach of the divine plan of the permanence of marriage. (Genesis 1:26-28, 31; 2:21-24; Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 19:3-9; John 2:1-11; Ephesians 5:21—6:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4)

**35.1.** In biblical teaching, marriage is the commitment of male and female to each other for life, reflecting Christ's sacrificial love for the Church. As such, marriage is intended to be permanent, and divorce an infraction of the clear teaching of Christ. Such infractions, however, are not beyond the forgiving grace of God when this is sought with repentance, faith and humility. It is recognized that some have divorce thrust upon them against their will or are compelled to resort to it for legal or physical protection. (Genesis 2:21-24; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 7:36-50, 16:18; John 7:53—8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 7:10-16; Ephesians 5:25-33)

**35.2.** Ministers of the Church of the Nazarene are instructed to give due care to matters relating to solemnizing marriages. They shall seek, in every manner possible, to convey to their congregations the sacredness of Christian marriage. They shall provide premarital counseling in every instance possible before performing a marriage ceremony including proper spiritual guidance for those who have experienced divorce. They shall only solemnize marriages of persons having the biblical basis for marriage. (107-7.1)

**35.3.** Members of the Church of the Nazarene are to seek prayerfully a redemptive course of action when involved in marital unhappiness, in full harmony with their vows and the clear teachings of the Scripture, their aim being to save the home and safeguard the good name of both Christ and His Church. Couples having serious marital problems are urged to seek counsel and guidance of their pastor and/or any other appropriate spiritual leaders. Failure to comply with this procedure in good faith and with sincere endeavor to seek a Christian solution, and subsequent obtainment of divorce and remarriage, makes one or both parties subject to possible discipline as prescribed in 504-4.2 and 505-5.12.

**35.4.** Through ignorance, sin, and human frailties, many in our society fall short of the divine plan. We believe that Christ can redeem these persons even as He did the woman at Samaria's well, and that sin against God's design for marriage does not place one beyond the forgiving grace of the gospel. Where a marriage has been dissolved and remarriage has followed, the marriage partners are enjoined to seek the grace of God and His redemptive help in their marriage relation. Such persons may be received into the membership of the church at such time as they have given evidence of their

regeneration and an awareness of their understanding of the sanctity of Christian marriage. (27, 107.1)

### **C. Sanctity of Human Life**

**36.** The Church of the Nazarene believes in the sanctity of human life and strives to protect against abortion, embryonic stem cell research, euthanasia, and the withholding of reasonable medical care to handicapped or elderly.

**Induced Abortion.** The Church of the Nazarene affirms the sanctity of human life as established by God the Creator and believes that such sanctity extends to the child not yet born. Life is a gift from God. All human life, including life developing in the womb, is created by God in His image and is, therefore, to be nurtured, supported, and protected. From the moment of conception, a child is a human being with all of the developing characteristics of human life, and this life is dependent on the mother for its continued development.

Therefore, we believe that human life must be respected and protected from the moment of conception. We oppose induced abortion by any means, when used for either personal convenience or population control. We oppose laws that allow abortion. Realizing that there are rare, but real medical conditions wherein the mother or the unborn child, or both, could not survive the pregnancy, termination of the pregnancy should only be made after sound medical and Christian counseling.

Responsible opposition to abortion requires our commitment to the initiation and support of programs designed to provide care for mothers and children. The crisis of an unwanted pregnancy calls for the community of believers (represented only by those for whom knowledge of the crisis is appropriate) to provide a context of love, prayer, and counsel. In such instances, support can take the form of counseling centers, homes for expectant mothers, and the creation or utilization of Christian adoption services.

The Church of the Nazarene recognizes that consideration of abortion as a means of ending an unwanted pregnancy often occurs because Christian standards of sexual responsibility have been ignored. Therefore the church calls for persons to practice the ethic of the New Testament as it bears upon human sexuality and to deal with the issue of abortion by placing it within the larger framework of biblical principles that provide guidance for moral decision making. (Genesis 2:7, 9:6; Exodus 20:13; 21:12-16, 22-25; Leviticus 18:21; Job 31:15; Psalms 22:9; 139:3-16; Isaiah 44:2, 24; 49:5; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:15, 23-25, 36-45; Acts 17:25; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:16; 7:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6)

The Church of the Nazarene also recognizes that many have been affected by the tragedy of abortion. Each local congregation and individual believer is urged to offer the message of forgiveness by God for each person who has experienced abortion. Our local congregations are to be communities of redemption and hope to all who suffer physical, emotional, and spiritual pain as a result of the willful termination of a pregnancy. (Romans 3:22-24; Galatians 6:1)

**Genetic Engineering and Gene Therapy.** The Church of the Nazarene supports the use of genetic engineering to achieve gene therapy. We recognize that gene therapy can lead to preventing and curing disease, and preventing and curing anatomical and mental disorders. We oppose any use of genetic engineering that promotes social injustice, disregards the dignity of persons, or that attempts to achieve racial, intellectual, or social superiority over others (Eugenics). We oppose initiation of DNA studies whose results might encourage or support human abortion as an alternative to term live birth. In all cases, humility, a respect for the inviolable dignity of human life, human equality before God, and a commitment to mercy and justice should govern genetic engineering and gene therapy. (Micah 6:8)

**Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research and Other Medical/Scientific Endeavors that Destroy Human Life after Conception.** The Church of the Nazarene strongly encourages the scientific community to aggressively pursue advances in stem cell technology obtained from sources such as adult human tissues, placenta, umbilical cord blood, animal sources, and other nonhuman

embryonic sources. This has the righteous end of attempting to bring healing to many, without violating the sanctity of human life. Our stand on human embryonic stem cell research flows from our affirmation that the human embryo is a person made in the image of God. Therefore, we oppose the use of stem cells produced from human embryos for research, therapeutic interventions, or any other purpose.

As future scientific advances make new technologies available, we strongly support this research when it does not violate the sanctity of human life or other moral, biblical laws. However, we oppose the destruction of human embryos for any purpose and any type of research that takes the life of a human after conception. Consistent with this view, we oppose the use, for any purpose, of tissue derived from aborted human fetuses.

**Human Cloning.** We oppose the cloning of an individual human being. Humankind is valued by God, who created us in His image, and the cloning of an individual human being treats that being as an object, thus denying the personal dignity and worth bestowed on us by our Creator. (Genesis 1:27)

**Euthanasia (Including Physician Assisted Suicide).**

We believe that euthanasia (intentionally ending the life of a terminally ill person, or one who has a debilitating and incurable disease that is not immediately life-threatening, for the purpose of ending suffering) is incompatible with the Christian faith. This applies when euthanasia is requested or consented to by the terminally ill person (voluntary euthanasia) and when the terminally ill person is not mentally competent to give consent (involuntary euthanasia). We believe that the historic rejection of euthanasia by the Christian church is confirmed by Christian convictions that derive from the Bible and that are central to the Church's confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. Euthanasia violates Christian confidence in God as the sovereign Lord of life by claiming sovereignty for oneself; it violates our role as stewards before God; it contributes to an erosion of the value the Bible places on human life and community; it attaches too much importance to the cessation of suffering; and it reflects a human arrogance before a graciously sovereign God. We urge our people to oppose all efforts to legalize euthanasia.

**Allowing to Die.** When human death is imminent, we believe that either withdrawing or not originating artificial life-support systems is permissible within the range of Christian faith and practice. This position applies to persons who are in a persistent vegetative state and to those for whom the application of extraordinary means for prolonging life provide no reasonable hope for a return to health. We believe that when death is imminent, nothing in the Christian faith requires that the process of dying be artificially postponed. As Christians we trust in God's faithfulness and have the hope of eternal life. This makes it possible for Christians to accept death as an expression of faith in Christ who overcame death on our behalf and robbed it of its victory.

**D. Human Sexuality**

**37.** The Church of the Nazarene views human sexuality as one expression of the holiness and beauty that God the Creator intended for His creation. It is one of the ways by which the covenant between a husband and a wife is sealed and expressed. Christians are to understand that in marriage human sexuality can and ought to be sanctified by God. Human sexuality achieves fulfillment only as a sign of comprehensive love and loyalty. Christian husbands and wives should view sexuality as a part of their much larger commitment to one another and to Christ from whom the meaning of life is drawn.

The Christian home should serve as a setting for teaching children the sacred character of human sexuality and for showing them how its meaning is fulfilled in the context of love, fidelity, and patience.

Our ministers and Christian educators should state clearly the Christian understanding of human sexuality, urging Christians to celebrate its rightful excellence, and rigorously to guard against its betrayal and distortion.

Sexuality misses its purpose when treated as an end in itself or when cheapened by using another person to satisfy pornographic and perverted sexual interests. We view all forms of sexual intimacy

that occur outside the covenant of heterosexual marriage as sinful distortions of the holiness and beauty God intended for it.

Homosexuality is one means by which human sexuality is perverted. We recognize the depth of the perversion that leads to homosexual acts but affirm the biblical position that such acts are sinful and subject to the wrath of God. We believe the grace of God sufficient to overcome the practice of homosexuality (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). We deplore any action or statement that would seem to imply compatibility between Christian morality and the practice of homosexuality.

We urge clear preaching and teaching concerning Bible standards of sexual morality. (Genesis 1:27; 19:1-25; Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:8-10)

## **E. Christian Stewardship**

**38. Meaning of Stewardship.** The Scriptures teach that God is the Owner of all persons and all things. We, therefore, are His stewards of both life and possessions. God's ownership and our stewardship ought to be acknowledged, for we shall be held personally accountable to God for the exercise of our stewardship. God, as a God of system and order in all of His ways, has established a system of giving that acknowledges His ownership over all human resources and relationships. To this end all His children should faithfully tithe and present offerings for the support of the gospel. (Manual 140) (Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:24-34; 25:31-46; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 12:13-24; 19:11-27; John 15:1-17; Romans 12:1-13; 1 Corinthians 9:7-14; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:6-15; 1 Timothy 6:6-19; Hebrews 7:8; James 1:27; 1 John 3:16-18)

**38.1. Storehouse Tithing.** Storehouse tithing is a scriptural and practical performance of faithfully and regularly placing the tithe into that church to which the member belongs.

Therefore, the financing of the church shall be based on the plan of storehouse tithing, and the local Church of the Nazarene shall be regarded by all of its people as the storehouse. All who are a part of the Church of the Nazarene are urged to contribute faithfully one-tenth of all their increase as a minimum financial obligation to the Lord and freewill offerings in addition as God has prospered them for the support of the whole church, local, district, educational, and general. The tithe, provided to the local Church of the Nazarene, shall be considered a priority over all other giving opportunities which God may lay upon the hearts of His faithful stewards, in support of the whole church.

**38.2. Fund-raising and Distribution.** In the light of the scriptural teaching concerning the giving of tithes and offerings for the support of the gospel, and for the erection of church buildings, no Nazarene church should engage in any method of fund-raising that would detract from these principles, hinder the gospel message, sully the name of the church, discriminate against the poor, or misdirect the people's energies from promoting the gospel. In disbursing to meet the requirements of the local, district, educational, and general programs of the Church of the Nazarene, local churches are urged to adopt and practice a financial apportionment plan, and to pay general, educational, and district apportionments monthly. (130, 154, 155-55.2, 413.21)

**38.3. Support of the Ministry.** "In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:14). The church is obligated to support its ministers, who have been called of God, and who, under the direction of the church, have given themselves wholly to the work of the ministry. We urge therefore that the members of the church voluntarily commit themselves to the task of supporting the ministry by gathering money weekly for this holy business and that the pastor's salary be paid regularly every week. (115.4)

### **38.4. Life Income Gifts, Planned and Deferred Giving.**

It is essential in the exercise of Christian stewardship that careful thought be given as to what shall be done with one's income and possessions over which the Lord makes the Christian a steward during this life. The Church of the Nazarene, recognizing the need for faithful stewardship in this life and the God-given vision to leave a legacy for the future, has established the Church of the Nazarene Foundation to enhance Christian stewardship through planned and deferred giving. Civil laws often do not provide for the distribution of an estate in such a way as to glorify God. Each Christian should give

attention to the preparation of a last will and testament in a careful and legal manner, and the Church of the Nazarene through its various ministries of missions, evangelism, education, and benevolences—local, district, educational, and general—is recommended for consideration.

### **F. Church Officers**

**39.** We direct our local churches to elect as church officers only persons who profess the experience of entire sanctification and whose lives bear public witness to the grace of God that calls us to a holy life; who are in harmony with the doctrines, polity, and practices of the Church of the Nazarene; and who support the local church faithfully in attendance and with tithes and offerings. (113.9-13.10, 127, 145, 146)

### **G. Rules of Order**

**40.** Subject to the applicable law, the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws of government in the *Manual*, the meetings and proceedings of the members of the Church of the Nazarene, local, district, and general, and the committees of the corporation shall be regulated and controlled according to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (latest edition) for parliamentary procedure. (113, 203, 300.3)

### **H. Amending the Covenant of Christian Conduct**

**41.** The provisions of the Covenant of Christian Conduct may be repealed or amended when concurred in by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting of a given General Assembly.