

# SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE MINISTERING PERSON

MS 3XM3 / 5XM5 / 6XM6  
MCMMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE

**\*REVISED VERSION: JULY 2018\***

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Tuesdays, 4:00 – 5:50 p.m.  
Beginning: Tuesday, September 11, 2018  
Concluding: Tuesday, December 11, 2018

Location: McMaster Divinity College  
Classroom – TBA

MTS and MDiv Specializations: PS, CW, CS  
(Pastoral Studies, Christian Worldview, Counselling and Spiritual Care)

## **Invitation to this Course**

Are you too busy to pray? Too stressed to listen for God's voice? Too exhausted, discouraged, or overwhelmed to attend to your spiritual well? Are you in a profession that drains all your reserves, or finding that life in academics leaves you with no energy to attend to your spiritual life? This course is designed to lead us towards principles and practices of creative spiritual life, which are essential for our own spiritual renewal and critical for meaningful ministry to others. Whether you are involved in full-time or part-time, paid or volunteer ministry, or engaged in another profession or academic discipline, each of us needs to tend to the vitality of our spiritual life. So, I invite you to come on a journey—and to let others join you for part of your journey. Come explore how Jesus' voice in the Beatitudes guides our spiritual path, not as moralistic teachings but as welcome vistas on a journey. Come and learn to listen to where God's Spirit is already breathing life and refreshment into your life. Come explore the personal spiritual landscapes of your journey. Consider the role of loss in fostering spiritual depth. Experience the diversity of postures and attitudes of prayer and worship that take us from the ends of ourselves right to the heart of God. Engage the vibrancy of practices that feed our spiritual life. Come to reflect, to write, to create, and to share in a community of fellow-learners, where each of us can learn about a life-long journey of deepening spiritual life and develop toolkits that will travel with us through life, ministry, and career.

Through required reading and reading assessments, lectures, class discussions, and the completion of assignments, we should fulfill the following course objectives:

## **Knowing**

- God's design for your spiritual life through the Beatitudes
- God's call on your life as a creative spiritual being

- more about the nature of God revealed in your life and the lives of others
- the challenge of balancing ministry with personal spiritual vitality

### Being

- explore the presence of God in your life, wherever you are right now
- find transformation in God's design
- be present to other pilgrims (and classmates) on the journey
- attend to God's still small voice in your life

### Doing

- develop deep knowledge and insightful reflection on the Beatitudes as spiritual life
- design your own personal life and ministry prayer
- refine your ability to see God at work in you, around you, and in others – an essential tool for ministry and life
- explore connections between creativity and spiritual life

### Course Textbooks\*

Required textbooks for this course are:

1. **Lloyd–Jones, Martyn.** *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*. London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1959. This is an extensive set of messages from a renowned preacher/pastor in England during the mid-20th century. Most significant for our purposes are the opening chapters specifically on the Beatitudes. Language and examples may seem dated or remote but if you dig in deeply and openly, you will encounter profound insights and life-permeating challenges.
2. **Nouwen, Henri.** *Creative Ministry*. Image, New York, 2003. This small book, which is the familiar mode of Nouwen, is packed with thoughtful reflection. Read slowly and carefully.
3. **Inge, John.** *A Christian Theology of Place*. Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2003. Read this book with the idea of spiritual “journey” in mind. Be prepared to discuss its relevance and impact in class.

**Your Choice (MDiv/MTS students choose one from each category; DPT/PhD students choose two from each category):**

**a. Monograph / Commentary.** MDiv or MTS students, choose one monograph or commentary on the Beatitudes / Sermon on the Mount from the following authors and use throughout the semester. DPT or PhD students, choose two (other choices available in consultation with the professor). Use these as resources in preparing your weekly reflections.

- Blomberg, Craig L. *Matthew*. The New American Commentary. New International Version. Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992.
- Carson, D. A. *Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World: An Exposition of Matthew 5–10*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999.
- France, R. T. *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008.

- Gundry, Robert H. *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995.
- Lutz, Ulrich. *Matthew 1–7*. Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible. Rev. ed. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2007.
- McKnight, Scot. *Sermon on the Mount*. The Story of God Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013.
- Nolland, John. *The Gospel of Matthew*. The New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005.
- Stott, John R. W. *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7): Christian Counter-Culture*. The Bible Speaks Today. Leicester, UK / Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: 1978.

**b. Authored Book(s) / Monograph(s).** MDiv or MTS students: Choose a book that represents your area of specialization and some aspect of spiritual life as a ministering person. DPT or PhD students: Choose two books that have relevance to your profession or academic field and your spiritual life. Select these in consultation with the professor. During the course, show evidence of engaging with these works by drawing on them in weekly assignments and/or in your final assignment.

**\*Note: There may be an update to textbooks related to this course. Please be in touch with me directly if you have any questions or watch for the revised version of this syllabus closer to the beginning of the semester.**

Suggested Other Reading:

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

Packer, J. I., and Carolyn Nystrom. *Praying: Finding Our Way through Duty to Delight*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006.

Willard, Dallas. *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God*. Updated and expanded. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1984, 2012.

You are encouraged to purchase your textbooks from the Divinity College's book service, READ On Books, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Bernice Quek provides these books at reasonable prices as a service to the Divinity College, and students that enroll in a class but purchase their books elsewhere make reasonable planning difficult. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). Other book services may also carry the texts.

### **Tentative Class Schedule:**

#### **Class 1 – Tuesday, September 11**

Introduction to

- The Spiritual Life of the Ministering Person – Syllabus
- The Beatitudes - overview

- Research and Reflection – weekly written assignment (x 10)
- Life and Ministry Prayers – develop over the semester
- Personal Spiritual Landscapes – weekly creative online posting (x 12)
- Connections between Creativity and Spiritual Life
- Leading In-Class Worship (x 1), including sign-up
- Final Paper or Project + In-Class Presentation (x 1)
- Course Expectations, Learning Community
- Special Topics – introduced throughout the semester, according to class relevance
- Late Assignment Penalty – to be determined with class community

**Class 2 – Tuesday, September 18**

Beatitude 1: Matthew 5:3: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”  
Reflection and Worship #1

**Class 3 – Tuesday, September 25**

Beatitude 2: Matthew 5:4: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”  
Reflection and Worship #2

**Class 4 – Tuesday, October 2**

Beatitude 3: Matthew 5:5: “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”  
Reflection and Worship #3

**NO CLASS** during Intensive Hybrid Week – **Tuesday, October 9**

**Class 5 – Tuesday, October 16**

Beatitude 4: Matthew 5:6: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”  
Reflection and Worship #4

**Class 6 – Tuesday, October 23**

Beatitude 5: Matthew 5:7: “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”  
Reflection and Worship #5

**Class 7 – Tuesday, October 30**

Beatitude 6: Matthew 5:8: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”  
Reflection and Worship #6

**Class 8 – Tuesday, November 6**

Beatitude 7: Matthew 5:9: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”  
Reflection and Worship #7

**Class 9 – Tuesday, November 13 – ONLINE CLASS DAY (ETS 2018)**

Beatitude 8: Matthew 5:10 (10–12): “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Reflection and Worship #8

**Class 10 – Tuesday, November 20 – ONLINE CLASS DAY (SBL 2018)**

Salt: Matthew 5:13: “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

Reflection and Worship #9

**DUE:** DPT / PhD Students – Draft #1 of Final Paper or Project.

**Class 11 – Tuesday, November 27**

Light: Matthew 5:14–16: “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Reflection and Worship #10

**DUE:** MDiv/MTS Students – Final Paper or Project.

**DUE:** DPT / PhD Students – Draft #2 of Final Paper or Project.

**Class 12 – Tuesday, December 4**

[Reflection and Worship #11 – depending on class size]

In-Class Presentations I

**Class 13 – Tuesday, December 11**

[Reflection and Worship #12 – depending on class size]

In-Class Presentations II

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**A Learning Community**

My design and hope for this class is that it be a mutual learning community, where each member of the community can grow through positive encouragement, constructive input, and active engagement with one another, with Scripture, with ideas, and in the ongoing development and strengthening of our faith and ministries. I encourage you to take risks in the material that you explore, share, and submit, and I will try to create an environment where you can trust one another with those outcomes. We are all people in process. Come with an openness to be challenged, reshaped or re-formed, and to grow through our mutual learning experience. As professor, I hope to empower each class member to develop as much as you are willing to, and I aim to treat each student with respect and dignity. I am a fellow learner in the community and I will attempt to offer information, reflection, experience, and questions for each of us to reflect on together, and to be hospitable in shaping an environment for each of your contributions. I welcome the responsibility and opportunity to give thoughtful evaluation and feedback to your thinking, both as you offer it to the class and through written work, so that your growth through this class can be maximized as a result of our collaboration. As a responsible member of our

learning community, I expect you to commit yourself to the class throughout the semester that we are together. This means not only that in our class interactions you will endeavor to treat all members of our class with respect and dignity, but that you will come prepared to be fully engaged in and with the class. Your weekly attendance and participation is required as it is critical for our learning community to function at an optimal level.

Assignments should be handed in on time and in good order. Late assignments will be docked incrementally, to be determined in collaboration with the class community on the first day. Assignments should be submitted in hard copy on standardized paper.

I welcome the opportunity to communicate with each of you outside class time. Please make an appointment with me if you think that I can assist you in your learning experience in any way.

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Note:** Memorize Matthew 5:1–16 (TNIV). No mark assigned. Just learn it.

### 1. WEEKLY RESEARCH AND REFLECTION.

At the beginning of each class day, submit your weekly research and reflection on the verse(s) and topic of the day. Provide evidence of thoughtful research and insightful reflection. Draw on your main commentary (use the same one throughout the semester). Interact with Martyn Lloyd-Jones on the relevant verses. Include any other book that you have chosen that relates to your specialization and/or professional or ministry or academic context. How does this Beatitude connect with your own spiritual life and formation? What insights do you have into this Beatitude? Show a deep sense of spiritual awareness and reflection on your own life as well as on the church or world around you.

#### **Total Word Count:**

- **MDiv/MTS: 3000 words (10 x 300 words each)**
- **DPT/PhD: 5000–6000 words (10 x 500/600).**

**Due:** Prior to the beginning of each class day. **Electronic submission.**

**Mark: 30%**

### 2. IN-CLASS DEVOTIONAL WORSHIP SEGMENT.

Plan and lead a 10-minute devotional worship segment in class, based on the verse(s) you select on the sign-up sheet. Design this segment to involve the rest of the class as fully and meaningfully as possible. You may include music but music is not required. Class size will determine if these are led individually, or by two or more people. (If collaborative, then each must be involved in the planning and leadership in a demonstrable way.) Provide all the resources needed for everyone's participation in this communal worship time; e.g. handouts, slides, printed music or lyrics, etc.

**Length: 10 minutes in-class time (maximum, including set-up, media, etc.).**

**Mark: 15%**

### 3. PERSONAL SPIRITUAL LANDSCAPE – WEEKLY ON-LINE POSTING.

Every week, create or find one item that captures something about your current personal spiritual landscape, and include at least one thoughtfully reflective sentence about how or why this choice is relevant for you or what it means to you. The range of creative options is expansive. You may choose art, music, poetry, photography, a short video, a website, an article, a book cover, etc. You may choose the same artistic medium every week (e.g. a different song each week or a piece of art each week) or a different medium each week (e.g. a song one week, a poem one week, a photograph on another). You may choose the same spiritual landscape each week (e.g. perhaps your current spiritual landscape is consistently like a desert or a mountain path or a valley, etc.), but in that case, you must explore something different about it each week. You are welcome to create your own work for any or all of the postings or you may choose to find something that is already available. Each must include a brief honest reflection. You will accumulate 12 reflective pieces by the end of the semester. Be prepared to draw on your weekly posting for some in-class sharing and discussion. It is my goal that the class environment be a safe and welcoming place. I encourage you to dig deeply and to take risks in this assignment.

**Due: By the beginning of each class (x 12).**

**Mark: 25%**

## **6. THE BEATITUDES AND SPIRITUAL LIFE – FINAL PAPER OR PROJECT (YOUR CHOICE):**

**Paper:** Research and write a paper that explores one or more aspects of Matthew 5 (or Matthew 5–7) in connection with spiritual life. This paper may be exegetical, historical, psychological, cultural, or any other kind of focus that is of interest to you and has relevance for your life and/or profession, ministry, academic pursuit, etc. Choose your topic and discuss your approach in consultation with the professor (communication by email is fine). If you are an MDiv or MTS student, this is an opportunity to develop a written piece that relates to your specialization. If you are a DPT or PhD student, you may shape this towards the kind of work or profession that you envision or in which you are already engaged. Prepare your manuscript according to the MDC Style Guide. Follow the MDC guidelines of 10 substantive sources, and document these appropriately. You must also demonstrate deep and reflective thinking: either within the paper, or as an additional piece, provide thoughtful reflection on what you learned in the process of doing this paper. All papers and projects will be presented in-class on one of the last two days of the course (DPT or PhD papers may require an earlier date – this will be determined at the beginning of the semester). Date and time available is dependent on class size, so this will be determined in the first week or two of the course. I encourage you to dig deeply and to take meaningful risks in this assignment.

**Paper Length (including footnotes and bibliography):**

- **MDiv / MTS students: 3000 words.**
  - **DUE: Tuesday, November 27, one week prior to first week of presentations.**
  - **In-Class Presentation, 15–20 minutes with interaction: one of final two weeks of course.**
- **DPT / PhD students: 6000 words.**
  - **DUE: First draft – Tuesday, November 20.**
  - **DUE: Revised second draft – Tuesday, November 27.**
  - **In-Class Presentation, 30–40 minutes with interaction: date to be determined.**

**Mark: 30%**

**Project:** Choose a project that allows you to creatively explore/present one or more of the Beatitudes or any other part of Matthew 5–7 that influences your spiritual life or that of others. Plan to take a risk in what you choose, and how you design and prepare this. Show evidence of a thoughtful and reflective approach. Your project may be a work of art, or a series of small articles, or the materials for a seminar, or numerous other possibilities. You may choose to do something that you have never attempted before (one possibility of taking a “risk”). Consult with the professor before finalizing your topic and mode of delivery (communication by email is fine). Provide a written reflection (750–1000 words) that describes what lies behind your project, how your project portrays what you are trying to say or depict, and what you learned in the process of creating it. All papers and projects will be presented in-class on one of the last two days of the course. Date and time available is dependent on class size, so this will be determined in the first week or two of the course. I encourage you to dig deeply and to take meaningful risks in this assignment.

**Project Length: To be determined in consultation with the professor.**

- **Accompanying Paper: 750–1000 words.**
- **MDiv / MTS students:**
  - **DUE: Tuesday, November 27, one week prior to first week of presentations.**
  - **In-Class Presentation, 15–20 minutes with interaction: one of final two weeks of course.**
- **DPT / PhD students:**
  - **DUE: First draft – Tuesday, November 20.**
  - **DUE: Revised second draft – Tuesday, November 27.**
  - **In-Class Presentation, 30–40 minutes with interaction: date to be determined.**

**Mark: 30%**

**Successful Completion of this Class for Credit** requires that each of the assignments be attempted. Failure to make a valid attempt to complete each of these requirements may constitute grounds for failure of the course.

**PERSONAL LIFE / MINISTRY PRAYER (NOTHING TO SUBMIT, NO MARKS ASSIGNED).**

Throughout the semester, identify areas or roles in your life around which you craft a thoughtful personal prayer. Areas or roles may include being a: daughter/son, parent, spouse, friend, colleague, student, teacher, mentor, pastor, counselor, social worker, care-giver, business owner, immigrant, patient, addict, etc. Include at least one that addresses your perception of your identity in Christ/God. Thoughtfully begin to craft a prayer that captures the heart of who you are. How does each one prompt you to meet with God differently? What do you sense that God wants to do in your life in each area? There is nothing to be submitted or graded, just encouragement to develop a life / ministry prayer. Be honest. Wrestle seriously with issues. Choose words that are real. Don't worry about whether you have everything together spiritually. Give this prayer any title that makes sense for you. You will not be required to share it, although you will be welcome to share some of what you learn in the process.

**\*\* Statement on Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty

~ <https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

### **Gender Inclusive Language**

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

**Please Note: This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions at any time.**