

Spiritual Direction: Answering the questions What is it Like,” “Who is it if For” and “What is it?”

What is Spiritual Direction Like?

Welcome! If you're watching this you obviously have questions about what spiritual coaching is. Here at Two Rivers we don't do counseling per se, at least not the clinical therapy kind. Our team consists of trained and experienced coaches that use the Bible as their basis of truth and a light dose of general psychology to inform their understanding of the human condition. The answers we offer are distinctly Christian, Biblical, and practical truths that have been the core of orthodoxy to Bible-believing folks for a very, long, time. What we do would have been described in the past as "pastoral counseling." Various of our coaches have more traditional education under their belt, and others less, and some none.

The coaching we do has been referred to as "spiritual direction" by again for centuries. If you've never heard of spiritual direction you certainly don't know what to expect should you decide you want/need some! Those that are familiar know that once you've tried it it's not as scary it as it seemed beforehand. Truth is, there are probably as many different styles of spiritual direction as there are people practicing it. Honestly, those who have never received coaching for their personal and spiritual life and relationships will probably feel that the whole thing is a little unsettling, so awkward is to be expected! Sorry, that's impossible to completely avoid.

The first session will help both sides of the equation determine if there's cause to begin a director/directee relationship. That's a two-sided decision, as both parties need to feel comfortable. If it's agreed together to move forward we assign some homework, explain how to do it, and have you contact your coach when you've completed it. The dress and atmosphere is casual and the conversation is tactful and respectful yet clear, direct and appropriately frank. The best way to learn more and get past the initial difficulty is to step up and take the plunge! We'd be honored to hear from you.

Let's Consider The Question Of Who Spiritual Direction Is For?

Spiritual direction is for those who want something more than fluffy ideas, pat platitudes, and warm feelings! If you do a Google image search for "spiritual direction" you'll find a bunch of mystical, soft-edged pictures of people in very pious poses, activities and locations. There are symbols and typology galore, all with deep implications and transcendent meanings intended! Not that any of that's necessarily bad, but it's just not always very helpful. Frankly, those kind of staged, unrealistic, fluffy pictures make me just a little sick. Much of it isn't very masculine either, but then, guys never ask for directions or help, right? *Let's be honest, sometimes religion and Christianity seems more ethereal than tangible, more unreachable than accessible, more delicate and pretty than masculine and handy, more distasteful and unhelpful than attractive and interesting and useful!*

SO WHO IS SPIRITUAL DIRECTION FOR? It's for all who're interested in learning to live well! Said another way, it's for anyone willing and ready for a breakthrough that leads to change, the word we use is "transformation." All who are up to doing the work needed to remove barriers that restrict and contaminate their relationship with God, others and self. In other words, spiritual direction is designed to build something new. The road there may require tearing down something old, renewing something lost, remodeling something outdated and unhelpful, improving something defective, and fixing what is broken. It's for anyone that's looking for real and lasting change in their lives, and is willing to ask God

for it. If you want a religion that's safe, that stays out of your way, that's more heart-warming than life-altering, stay away from God and spiritual direction!

Spiritual direction is for people coming from two different places:

Some come at it for from a need for a Spiritual Tune-up = People who's lives are going well and are seeking a spiritual tune-up to make sure it does stay that way. We called that "Preventative Coaching."

Others come at it for from a need for Spiritual Truth = People who's lives aren't going so well and are seeking spiritual truth to make sure it doesn't stay that way! We called that "Reparative Coaching."

The first happens before something breaks the other after something has broken! Spiritual direction is designed to help people – who want more from life and their faith – break through, lighten their load, and draw closer to Him. That's the way to a satisfying life. And it can't help but improve your relationships in life, and the quality of, your whole life!

Disclaimer: We need to remember that being satisfied and fulfilled in life is not equivalent to having no struggles or challenges or disappointments! Learning to live involves fight, persistence, courage, and conviction.

So, What Is Spiritual Direction?

There are a plethora of descriptions out there, and each one is a little more complicated than the last! But the most common aspect of them all is the idea of "coming home" to a significant relationship with God. "Spirituality" from a Christian point of view is about humanity in relationship with God. It's about our beginning at a place far from Him and the process of moving ever closer. Think of it as our invisible soul in union (friendship) with the invisible God.

So, spiritual direction is simply about helping people reestablish that relationship with God. It's about helping people grow closer to Him, which in turn affects positively the way they live. *It's about the pursuit of health for your soul.* About learning how to really live! We're helping people build soul-health – knowledge, endurance, resilience, and strength – to possess the life they want, and were meant to have, which is a life with God. We believe we can't have that fulfilled life apart from God.

Consider thinking about spiritual direction like this:

Imagine that you want to get more fit, improve your cardiovascular system, build some muscle, lose a little weight, trim those pecks, sculpt those glutes, build a six-pack... You get my point. So, you find the needed finances in your budget and make an appointment with a personal trainer. Your trainer soon makes it clear that discipline, exercise, habit, routine, determination, commitment, and pain are all necessary. Some things will have to go to make room for the new. In order to break through to the next level of health and performance, it's going to take some tenacity and exertion, and you're going to need help. It would be the same for any athlete, executive or professional who wants to improve their leadership, management, sales skills, or people skills.

A spiritual director does something very similar to a personal trainer... but for the soul. The goal is to break through life limitations and into a new level of familiarity with God. Like a personal trainer, a spiritual director is a workout partner that pushes us to excel, to reach for more, to meet our potential, to get rid of any weights that hold back the progression of our relationship with God. They're someone who's on the same journey, pursuing the same goal, working toward the same achievement. They're a little more fit than we are, a little further down the road, and so they can humbly show us how they got

there. They're encouraging, even pushing us to come up to their level, and then surpass them. They celebrate our fitness and selflessly want for us to eclipse them, to break through to a new level in our struggle to know God deeply and follow Him fully.

Some things will have to go. The "baggage" we carry from our past with their hurt and pain and the bad habits and reactions - or sins - that have developed because of them. A spiritual director will help us see those relationally "unhealthy" habits we currently have, root them out, and leave them behind. Our horizontal relationships are inseparably entwined with our vertical relationship with God. Improve one and you improve the other. In fact, a spiritual director will focus on your relationship with God knowing that a meaningful and satisfying life and good relationships flow from a healthy connection with God.

I guarantee that it'll require discipline(s), exercise, habit, routine, determination, commitment, and pain! Your spiritual muscles need to build capacity and memory and your heart needs the benefit of a cardio workout in order to climb spiritually, personally, and relationally.

(Another Metaphor)

Not everyone is familiar with the world of physical trainers and daily workouts. In case that's you, or in case you just want another way to look at the subject, let approach it from a different angle.

Spiritual direction is the lifelong quest of a roof that is completely open to God, no walls between us and others... and no elephants in the room! Spiritual direction is assistance we need to move in all three directions. Spiritual direction helps us deconstruct the house of self-protection we've been building for years that's currently poisoning all our relationships.

Consider these words of Jesus' as he was speaking to someone in his day who was a religious leaders at that time;

*...You must ⁽¹⁾ **love the Lord your God** with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: ⁽²⁾ **'Love your neighbor as ⁽³⁾ yourself.'** No other commandment is greater than these." ([Mark 12:29-31](#), The New Living Translation)*

(Elephants? Really?)

Jesus gave two commandments, but we see three directions that love must take. We need to love God and others, but do it as we love ourselves. Three people need our love, God, others and ourselves. Now, the pachyderms represent our relationship with ourselves. This is stuff that's present in our "house" but shouldn't be! Elephants are always making a mess of things, are always in the way, taking up space and resources, and yet are ignored! Others know they're there and you probably do too, but we're trying hard to look past it, work around it, and pretend it's no big deal. Elephants often represent things we've given up on and just accepted, things we believe that are just never going to be changed, sometimes we've even name and befriended them!

A spiritual director is a person that's working on the same deconstruction. But additionally, they have the gifts and calling that enables them to communicate their journey with others in a way that helps them progress in their shared adventure. Spiritual direction is spending time with someone whose "house" is less prominent than ours, someone who is less protected and shut off and unable to relate for fear of being used, rejected, or abused.

Up till now I've been using descriptions my own to describe what we're talking about here so let's look at a couple thoughts that we find in the Bible. It says in Colossians 3:10...

“Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.”

New Clothes!

Obviously, change is required. A change as visible and obvious as proudly putting on a new outfit that you’ve just purchased. That’s the picture that the word “renewed” paints. Change is on the horizon. Breakthrough will be necessary.

A couple things should be highlighted. First, this renewal or restoration is intended to convey a continual process. It’s something not completed in this life so no one has arrived; we’re all still on our way. Second, the way to engage and promote the process is included. We’re to know our Creator, heaping knowledge on top of knowledge, leading to changes that make us more like Him. There are intellectual and participative aspects. Knowledge must lead to transformation. Knowing births doing. Learning more about God precipitates allowing God to gradually bring us into compliance with His example.

Feel free to keep poking around the site looking for ideas and some answers. You might find something and read something and learn some things that will help you make some changes that won’t even need spiritual direction. If you do you can also shoot off a questions, you can click in the box that you’re going to find right below where you found this video if you’d like to [fill out a quick form](#) and ask for some spiritual direction yourself. I trust our content will help you “learn to live” in a growing relationship with God, and find a fulfilling and meaningful life! Thanks for listening.