



spiritual formation

REFLECTION

Each quarter, Doxa focuses on a spiritual formation practice we believe the Spirit will use to form us into the image of Jesus. In our second year, we will focus on the practices of Reflection, Rule of Life, Service, and Hospitality.

THE PRACTICE OF REFLECTION

Read the text: Psalm 139

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

O Lord, you have searched me and known me!

You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.

You search out my path and my lying down
and are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue,
behold, O Lord, you know it altogether.

You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is high; I cannot attain it.

Where shall I go from your Spirit?

Or where shall I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there!

If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me.

If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light about me be night,"
even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is bright as the day,
for darkness is as light with you.
For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.
My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.
How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
If I would count them, they are more than the sand.
I awake, and I am still with you.
Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God!
O men of blood, depart from me!
They speak against you with malicious intent;
your enemies take your name in vain.
Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against you?
I hate them with complete hatred;
I count them my enemies.
Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!

The practice of reflection can lead to real peace and transformation when we engage in it *with* God. Self-examination done by ourselves leads only to feelings of shame, guilt, and fear. With God, we have a safe place to be honest about who we really are and experience genuine transformation. When we approach the practice of self-examination or reflection, we must know three things about God (from Psalm 139): 1) He already knows us fully, 2) He loves us and will never leave us, and 3) He is committed to forming us into the image of Jesus. When we're rooted in these truths, we are able to be completely honest and experience real transformation.

Discussion Questions:

These questions are written for DNA groups, but you can use in any setting, including missional communities. Because they were written for the intimacy of DNA friendships, you may need to adjust for larger groups.

1. What does your reflection or self-examination typically look like? Does your time of reflection at the end of a day (whether planned or not) usually happen with God, or just in your own head? Does it lead to rest or towards anxiousness, shame, and guilt?
2. Of the three truths about God in Psalm 139, which do you need help trusting the most? Why do you think that is? (*See above for three truths.*)
3. David is very honest with God about what he's thinking and feeling ("I hate my enemies!"). Do you feel like you can be that honest with God? Why or why not? How do the truths David rehearses beforehand allow him to be honest?

4. Honest reflection *with* God will not lead to condemnation, but to confession and transformation. Is confession and repentance a regular part of your day? Why or why not?
5. God knows you, stays with you, and has a vision for forming you. These truths invite us to honest and transformative reflection with Him. What can you learn from how God “reflects” with us on our days to shape how you do that with each other in a DNA group? What would a DNA group modeled after God’s posture towards us look like?
6. Would reflecting *with* God as a daily practice be helpful to you? What would that look like?

Doxa’s **Reflection Formation Guide** gives you practical steps to learn how engage in daily reflection using the Prayer of Examen. Find it here: doxa-church.com/formation-reflection.