RESOURCE GUIDE **VERSION 1.0**

beyond

UPWARD . INWARD . OUTWARD



DEVELOPMENT

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Overview

In response to Phi Kappa Theta's passion and priority for the spiritual development of their members and the encouragement for brothers to explore their natural curiosity about spirituality and individual purpose, there has been a renewed commitment to develop a comprehensive spiritual development curriculum.

This robust resource will celebrate the Fraternity's Catholic heritage while welcoming the diverse perspectives of all brothers, with the hopeful expectation that the entire brotherhood will embody the moral values upon which the Fraternity was established.

Navigating the complexities of how college men make sense of spiritual beliefs, questions, and concerns is a challenging feat. However, recent research underscores the fact that college men continue to exhibit high levels of spiritual interest and

involvement, although they are redefining their spiritual beliefs and reframing their spiritual journeys in far different ways.

As a result, two DMB Coaches, who have a combined 35 years of experience in mentoring tens of thousands of college men, have taken the lead in this spiritual development project. With special attention given to the spiritual dimension of male college student development theory, these experts have produced this first rendition of a Φ K Θ -contextualized Facilitator's Resource Guide to better equip spiritual alumni volunteers with fresh and innovative resources to mentor our Vice Presidents of Spiritual Development across the nation. Furthermore, this user-friendly "toolkit" or "playbook" is filled with a variety of helpful insights and ideas for undergraduates within each chapter to craft environments for their brothers that include spiritual experiments, exercises, and encounters that will strengthen each brotherhood across all five developmental areas (fraternal, intellectual, leadership, social, and spiritual).

We anticipate that this new material will be the first step to enlarging and expanding the notion of spiritual development for our brotherhood, educating our membership in Catholic theology and traditions, encouraging diversity and pluralism in the context of personal spiritual growth, extinguishing religious biases and bigotry among the undergraduates, and empowering college vice presidents to elevate spiritual development in all of the chapters.

This Resource Guide is divided into eight modules (plus an Appendix of Additional Resources) that can be utilized in whatever order and pace that best serves each local chapter in light of the unique personalities and preferences of its members. Each of the eight modules are bolstered by content in six main areas: Context, Curriculum, Contemplation, Conversations, Choices, and Challenge. Over the next few years, Dr. Michael Brown and Mr. Shawn Cramer will be hosting face-to-face training workshops and/or retreats for designated volunteer mentors and elected undergraduate officers in how to best utilize this Resource Guide within individual chapters across the country. These interactive onsite workshop environments will be important for a more comprehensive explanation of the material, modeling the presence and proficiencies of a spiritual mentor, and role-playing the various nuances of spiritual dialogue and activities.



MODULE 1 Page 1

EXPLORE

your own ultimate questions

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EVALUATE

your own spiritual beliefs

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your own spiritual challenges

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with spiritual activities

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EDUCATE
yourself about our Catholic heritage

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Outline





CONTEXT

Conceptualized as one of the twelve dimensions of life, Dr. Michael Brown believes that the **spiritual dimension** focuses on the most important facets of a human being's existence, expressions, and experiences that prompt inquiries into the most important and inspiring questions of life.

Recent research among 18-24 year old college men shows that spirituality is still an important consideration, since 75% of young adult men would consider themselves spiritual and/or religious, and almost half admit that they are on a spiritual quest in order to make sense of these big questions: Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going?

Granted, the spiritual questioning process looks and feels different for each young Phi Kappa Theta brother, depending on a variety of factors. However, one thing is certain: the ultimate questions that surface in the heart and mind of each brother is shaping
him in extraordinary ways, regardless of whether or not he detects the personal impac of his spiritual questions on his life.

CURRICULUM

The Art of Asking Bold Questions & Exploring Big Ideas

A CONSIDERATION OF BIG QUESTIONS

Big questions are those inquiries into the most important, intriguing, and influential aspects of a higher power, ultimate reality, meaning, purpose, humanity, justice, morality, and relationships.

FIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF BIG QUESTIONS

- 1 Big questions are significant
- 2 Big questions are spiritual
- **3** Big questions are selfless
- 4 Big questions are satisfying
- 5 Big questions are stimulating

FIVE COMMON CATALYSTS FOR BIG QUESTIONS

- 1 Catastrophe
- 2 Crisis
- 3 Conflict
- 4 Confusion
- 5 Contemplation

FIVE CONSEQUENCES OF ASKING BIG QUESTIONS

- 1 Asking big questions shapes perspective
- 2 Asking big questions clarifies priorities
- 3 Asking big questions deepens relationships
- 4 Asking big questions develops critical thinking skills
- **5** Asking big questions encourages better choices

FIVE CHOICES IN REGARDS TO BIG QUESTIONS

- 1 Be concerned with the brevity of life
- 2 Be curious about everything
- **3** Be contemplative about the whys
- 4 Be conversational with close friends
- 5 Be committed to explore answers

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\sim	CONTEMPLATION
	the three biggest questions you have personally considered that feel the lificant to you?
1	
2	
3	
C	CONVERSATIONS
were the the world	h your brothers those three questions. Then describe to others what you feel catalysts that prompted those questions in your life (catastrophes throughout, personal crises in your life, relational conflict with other people, confusion issue, or private contemplation about a big idea)?
✓	CHOICES
	ose to think about the brevity of life at AM/PM each day and to pause seconds to feel grateful for my existence.
✓ I choc	se to explore the answer to this big question:
✓ I choc	ose to talk about this particular spiritual question



CONTEXT

Spiritual questions rarely happen in a vacuum, but are activated by a precipitating factor... either internal or external.

In Dr. Brown's research on the spiritual questioning process among college-aged men, he has identified eleven common triggers that prompt young men to consider more often the bold questions of life. Furthermore, within the following eleven groupings, there are an additional 28 sub-categories of potential factors that might personally resonate with you as a cause for some of your spiritual questions.



CURRICULUM

Eleven Triggers of Spiritual Questions for College Men

1. PERSONAL DYNAMICS

Identity and Personality Beliefs and Worldview Reflections, Thoughts, and Feelings Passions, Pursuits, and Choices

2. RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL INFLUENCES

Personal Perceptions
People and Places
Practices
Events and Experiences
Holidays
Texts and Manuscripts

3. FAMILY FACTORS

Connections
Conversations
Conflict and Crisis

4. CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS

Connections
Conversations
Conflict and Crisis

Eleven Triggers of Spiritual Questions for College Men (cont.)

5. COLLEGE CAMPUS

Transitions
Curricular Components
Co-Curricular Engagement
Environment and Community

6. PAIN AND SUFFERING

Intrapersonal Interpersonal Impersonal

7. EVERYDAY EXPOSURE TO PEOPLE

Observations Interactions

8. SOCIETAL AND CULTURAL NORMS

9. ENCOUNTERS WITH NATURE

10. MEDIA & MUSIC

News

Entertainment

11. DAILY LIVING

Experiences and Activities



CONTEMPLATION

Personally consider what might have triggered spiritual questions in your own life in each of the eleven categories:

How do you feel that your gender, sense of identity, distinct personality features, race or ethnicity, philosophy about life, core values, or perspective on the world around you shaped your spiritual questions?

How do you feel that your religious background, religious leaders, religious traditions, religious activities, religious leaders, religious literature, or religious holidays have affected the kinds of spiritual questions you entertain?		
How might your family background, family experiences, family drama, family conversations, family norms, family expectations, family crises, family conflict, and other family dynamics play into how you feel about the spiritual questioning process?		
How have your connections and conversations with childhood friends, college friends, and post-college friends influenced your spiritual and/or religious perspectives, ideas, and questions?		
Has the college experience (leaving home, transition to a new place, increased personal freedom, exposure to new people and ideas, classes and coursework, interaction with instructors, involvement with clubs and organizations, and fraternity life) made an impact on your spiritual trajectory?		
How have the difficulties of life (identity struggles, fears, failures, frustrations, doubt, guilt, confusion, mental health challenges, financial problems, strained relationships, betrayal and loneliness, and sickness and death of loved ones), affected the nature and frequency of your spiritual questions?		

How have your encounters with humanity (strangers and acquaintances) in everyday life in a variety of settings and environments made you pause and consider the ultimate questions of life?
Have the customs, traditions, beliefs, norms, culture, priorities, and choices of groups of people different from yourself influenced your view of the meaning of life and/or what you think is ultimately most important?
When you personally experience the striking beauty or terrifying force of nature, does it ever affect you in a spiritual sense? Describe an encounter with nature that prompted you to consider a big idea or inspiration beyond yourself or your daily life.
Movies, television, music, and social media pervade and saturate our lives. In what ways do you feel like your spiritual journey is impacted by these numerous external influences?
Think of an unexpected moment, unanticipated experience, or a spontaneous encounter in your daily life that caught you off-guard and caused you to consider a big "why" question.



CHOICES

✓ Set aside 30 minutes each week as brothers (for 11 consecutive weeks) to meet together to explore the eleven triggers as a chapter. Bring this notebook with your reflections and be prepared to share with one another what you recorded during your time of personal contemplation in response to the previous questions.



CURRICULUM

The Six Categories of Men's Spiritual Questions

1. ORIGINS AND ORDER

Universal Causes Earthly Beginnings

2. DIVINITY AND DEITY

God

Satan

Extra-Terrestrial Life

3. THE MYSTERIOUS

Reality and Realms Supernatural Phenomena

4. HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Identity, Self-Awareness, Choices, and Feelings Purpose, Calling, and Direction Community and Relationships Pain and Suffering Social Justice Morality and Virtue

5. TRUTH AND BELIEF

Religion and Spirituality
Sacred Texts

6. DESTINY AND DESTINATIONS

Death
Post-Death Journey
Afterlife



CONTEMPLATION

With a highlighter or pen in hand, review the Comprehensive Catalogue of Spiritual Questions in Appendix A of this Resource Guide. Mark any of the questions that you have wondered about at some point in your life.



CONVERSATIONS

Choose five of the most personally compelling questions from Appendix A that you would enjoy talking about with a trusted friend. Write the five questions in this section... and commit to initiating a personal conversation with someone about these questions in the next 30 days.

1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

UPWARD

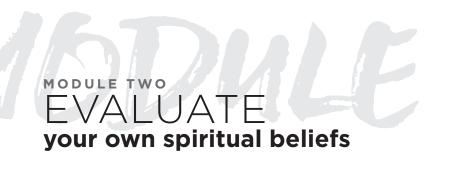
Realize that reality is much bigger than you and your personal life experiences, and that there are ultimate questions worth exploring as you develop into the man you are aspiring to become. Look beyond yourself for the answers to life's complex questions, knowing that who or what you choose as your compass and guide might be one of the most important decisions of your life.

INWARD

Reflect on the big questions of life in a manner that connects with your values and beliefs. Do not be fearful of asking the hard questions or shrink back from pondering ideas that feel unsettling. You will grow deeper and become more mature as you personally meditate on the many mysteries of life.

OUTWARD

Reach out and talk to your brothers (and other friends and family members) about your personal thoughts concerning ultimate reality and those ideas that inspire you to become the best version of yourself. Verbalize your spiritual questions to others and invite conversations that move beyond mere pleasantries and dive beneath the surface.





CONTEXT

The first module on Exploring gave attention to your bold questions and big inquiries about the many mysteries of our complex and complicated existence. This section focuses on your personal beliefs and viewpoints about religion, spirituality, and faith.

The reflective exercises and suggested discussions are for all Phi Kappa Theta brothers, regardless of your self-perceptions about yourself in this spiritual dimension of your life. The curriculum found here will take into account your family background, religious or non-religious upbringing, and your spiritual (or secular) orientation.

This session of self-discovery will assist you in better understanding how you interpret the world and the manner in which you self-construct meaning and purpose in life.

Your personal investment in this module will give you the descriptive language

required to more adequately communicate to others what you believe and consider true for yourself.



CHOICES

On a white board/black board split into three sections (or on three large easel pads), brainstorm together as brothers the differences between religion, spirituality and faith.

RELIGION	SPIRITUALITY	FAITH

CURRICULUM

How Young Adults Define and Redefine Religion & Spirituality

In recent years, the tension between religion and spirituality has become more pronounced in American culture because of changes in human perceptions of sacred ideas, shifting religious and spiritual activities, and fluctuations in how people think about God, the world, and the meaning of life, in general.

These changes and shifts are most evident among young adults and manifest themselves on the college campus in a variety of ways. As a result, this phenomenon shapes the community perception of spiritual development among brothers of differing viewpoints within each Phi Kappa Theta chapter across the country.

Undoubtedly, there is an arguable difference between religion and spirituality. Is so, what are these differences, and most particularly, how do the individual perceptions of these two provocative ideas among Phi Kappa Theta men play themselves out in beliefs, behaviors, and brotherhood?

There is arguably a **difference between religion and spirituality** and a variety of notions have informed this distinction. **Spirituality**, in its broadest interpretation, is humanity's sacred sense of identity, purpose, and calling, as expressed in various aspirations, passions, beliefs, and values, whereas **religion** is a "corporate and public ... doctrinal and traditional" system that is shaped by an "institutional set of beliefs, values, and practices, based on the teachings of a spiritual leader or sect" (Nash, 2001b, p. 25).

Peteet (1994) expressed the difference in this manner: **religiousness** as expressing "commitments to beliefs and practices characteristic of particular traditions" and **spirituality** as apprehending "the human condition in a larger and or transcendent context ... therefore concerned with the meaning and purpose of life and with unseen realities, such as one's relationship to a supreme being" (p. 237).

Love (2001) wrote of **religion** as a "shared system of beliefs, principles, or doctrines related to a belief in and worship of a supernatural power or powers regarded as creator(s) and governor(s) of the universe" (p. 8).

Furthermore, this distinction between religion and spirituality is observed among college students, as well, in that "spirituality can stand apart from religion, leading some individuals to classify themselves as spiritual, but not religious" (Bryant, Choi, & Yasuno, 2003, p. 724).

In another study, students differentiated between **religion** and **spirituality**, describing "spirituality as an inner private process whereas religion is seen as an outward public practice in a particular community of belief" (Rogers & Love, 2007, p. 701). Nash (2001a) took issue with the deliberate separation of the two terms, so he "intentionally combine(s) the two words 'religion' and 'spirituality' in my teaching because, in spite of students' widespread popular disdain for the former and their near unanimous approval for the latter, I believe the two terms represent two closely related perspectives" (p. 4).

Pargament (1999) felt that the disregard of "institutional" religion in favor of a more "personal" spirituality within an increasing individualistic and isolated culture devalues religion's intrinsic and inseparable connection to spiritual substance and motivations. Furthermore, "spirituality is the heart and soul of religion, and religion's most central function. Spirituality has to do with the paths people take in their efforts to find, conserve, and transform the sacred in their lives. Whereas religion encompasses the search for many sacred and nonsacred objects of significance, spirituality focuses specifically and directly on the search for the sacred" (Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999).

HONEST THOUGHTS FROM COLLEGE STUDENTS ON RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

- "Religion is an artificial institution... that was invented by people, and it didn't come from God... and was developed by human beings before you." Spirituality, in contrast, is a "feature of your mind... and is a trait."
- Religion is "the belief system you have about the truth."
- "So in a lot of ways, I'm religious, by the fact that I habitually do things, just because I've always been doing them that way. However, in a lot of ways I'm spiritual because I know that even when I'm seeking a higher being, when I'm seeking God, when I'm seeking Christ, I know that I can grasp something in the spiritual realm that nobody in the physical realm could attain."
- A religious individual is "someone who does the practices, who practices their faith, and who practices what they believe in. With spirituality, you can create your own definition."
- "Religion is a set belief system, if it's like Judaism or Hinduism or Wicca or whatever. It's that set in stone, like, a system of belief that people choose to be a part of or choose not to be a part of. Whereas spirituality is our own individual interpretation of maybe these different religions and what we think of God or whatever we believe in. So while religion is more group-based, I think spirituality is more personal and individual. Spirituality is about a journey, I guess."

- "Religion is basically what you classify yourself with. Like saying, 'My religion is Catholic, or my religion is Lutheran or Muslim.' It's basically what you classify yourself with. Religion is kind of old-school; like, my grandma is religious cause she prays a lot, and she goes to church a lot. What I like is when people are, 'Oh, I'm not religious. I'm just spiritual.' Spiritual is deeper to me and [it is about] having a spiritual connection, saying, 'Oh, I'm spiritually inclined with God.' That just seems deeper."
- Religion is about "following certain rules," whereas spirituality requires "following the right thing and pinpointing the good stuff."
- "Religion is a manmade construct. Religion is really Catholicism, Protestantism, Baptist, Lutheran, and all the little denominations that you could ever possibly think of. Spirituality, on the other hand, is the actual belief that there is something beyond you, that there is something that you are connected to, that your life is not your own, and that you owe something to this world or to a higher being. Spirituality is about a connection, and honestly, some people feel that connection stronger than others."
- Religion is a "group of people with a belief that encourages them to do some similar special things like pray or have a similar goal of living and activities." Spirituality is "similar to religion, but something from the heart."
- "Religion is a practice and discipline that isn't always correct. Religion could be anything, from being a marathon runner to being part of a club. It's something to be part of."
- "Religion is a \$5 combo at KFC. I know what I'm getting. Spirituality is the guiding force. It's the community and the conversations that intertwine both the personal and communal. It can be a very individualistic thing. I think, for many people it has to be individualistic, but it also thrives on community."
- **K** "Religion is something to believe in and something to follow."
- "Religion is an organized set of practices that help a person develop a relationship with a divinity or higher being by looking to texts or organized teachings." Spirituality, on the other hand, is "one's personal exploration of themselves, the world that they live in, and divinity."
- "Though I don't want to say religion is a bad term, I refrain from using it so much because of the social connotations that are attached with it." On the other hand, spirituality is "basically a spiritual journey of an individual that is deeper and more than a relationship with the rest of the world, and that is what I like about it."

- "Religion is a *part* of spirituality. Spirituality is the bowl, and inside that bowl, you can see religion, moral values, traditions, customs, and behavior." Spirituality is "much more broad and is given to us from birth, even earlier than we got religion. Spirituality is the beginning of religion; it's what is inside of you. It's behavior. It's your understanding of what is going on in your life. It is understanding how you can improve yourself. It is how to find out what way you should act in each situation."
- Religion is an "organized group of people who share a common belief that have certain laws and things that they follow on a regular basis. A religious person has their beliefs in a higher power or the universe or whatever they believe in and practices certain rituals regularly and is supported by followers of the same faith... and have certain rules that they go by that hold them stronger in what they believe in, and dedicate themselves to that." Spirituality is "behind religion" and "like the air that's above religion. I feel like spirituality is more free. It's not something that you need to go through another person to find, but it's sort of what you believe in your heart... without any expectations from others."

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CONTEMPLATION

n light of your reflections of this reading and the various discussions with brothers, write a few personal thoughts below about whether you would consider yourself eligious, spiritual, neither, or both? And why?	

CURRICULUM

The Six Spiritual Stories of College Men

Robert Nash (2001a; 2001b) proposes a narrative approach to describing the various ways in which college men examine and express their spiritual journeys. He arranged his ideas within a storytelling genre that he coined *religio-spiritual narratives*. Initially, Nash (2001b) depicted six religio-spiritual narratives that function in effect as distinct compositions of faith. Focused less on "the content of specific religions and spiritualities and more about personal journeys and discoveries" (Nash, 2001b, p. 64), three *mainstream* narratives – orthodoxy, wounded belief, and mainline, and three *alternative* narratives – activism, exploration, and secular humanism, comprise categories of religious and spiritual stories reflective of a range of college students.

NASH'S RELIGIO-SPIRITUAL NARRATIVES

CATEGORY	NARRATIVE	DESCRIPTOR
Mainstream	Orthodoxy	Belief in one absolute truth
Mainstream	Mainline	Value traditions, tolerance, and predictability
Mainstream	Wounded	Tentative, fearful, anti-authoritarian, and unsatisfied
Alternative	Activism	Motivated by faith in action, justice, and social reform
Alternative	Exploration	Spiritually inquisitive, experience-driven & syncretistic
Alternative	Secular Humanist	Rejection of organized religion in favor of logic and reason

Nash's (2001a) three mainstream narratives (or traditional stories) are rooted in Christian, Jewish, and Islamic religious traditions. The **orthodoxy narrative** is assumed by those who believe: "there is a Truth that is unimpeachable, immutable, and final, and it can only be found in a particular book, institution, prophet, or movement. The mission of the Orthodox Believer is to deliver this Truth to others as an act of love and generosity" (p. 13).

Adherents to the orthodox position reflect a wide range of belief systems, though a large percentage of them on American college campuses are evangelical Christians. As Nash (2001b) reflected upon his time with orthodox students, he clarified that "some are stridently religious, others moderately so; some are anti-intellectual and self-righteous, whereas others are reasonable, charming, even modest in their claims"

The Six Spiritual Stories of College Men (cont.)

(p. 69). While this narrative was composed with mostly Christians in mind, "no single religious, political, economic, or educational ideology has a corner on the market of the orthodoxy narrative" (Nash, 2001b, p. 69). The orthodox narrative might possibly reflect the beliefs and behaviors of Atheists, serious-minded Muslims, Zionist Jews, or even evangelical Tea Party conservatives.

The second traditional story is the **mainline narrative**. Neither excessively conservative nor liberal in their political persuasions, averse to authoritarian structures and tolerant of diverse perspectives, this narrative reflects the experiences of a large segment of the college student population. Furthermore, these more reserved religious practitioners "prefer a life of traditional worship that balances traditions, standards, self-discipline, and moral conscience with a degree of personal freedom, Biblical latitude, and the joie de vivre of close community life" (Nash, 2001a, p. 13). Mainliners prefer the predictable practices and time-tested traditions of their ancestors and the clear distinction between the sacred and secular, and exude a mild-mannered comfortability with content and even complacent parishioners. Nash (2001b) described this large bloc of college students as "solidly committed to their beliefs, but not triumphalistic, quiet not noisy, and civil not contentious ... holdouts against modernity and the religious experimentation and deconstruction that so often accompany it" (p. 86).

Unlike the orthodox and mainline believers, self-identified victims associated with the **wounded narrative** are not satisfied with their religious or spiritual experiences because of the abuse they endured at the hands of religious authorities in the name of religious virtue. These individuals, who often experience negative emotions derived from depressing memories, are asking a similar question: Where was God when all this was happening to me? The struggle with theodicy (i.e., the problem of evil) is inevitable for those who "suffered at the hands of hypocritical, over-zealous clergy, lovers, parents, relatives, and friends" (Nash, 2001a, p. 14). Wounded believers share a very different story than their orthodox counterparts, even though it is likely that many wounded individuals were once immersed in orthodoxy or its mainline cousin. Nash (2001b) described them as "highly tentative in their religious views, extremely self-effacing, fearful, genuinely ambivalent, and almost obstinately anti-authoritarian ... very angry or very resigned ... all of them have wretchedly sad stories to tell" (p. 76).

Nash's (2001b) three alternative narratives articulate an "overall religio-spiritual view that intentionally integrates a number of beliefs and practices from a variety of sources into new expressions ... that go way beyond traditional and modernistic understandings of Christianity and Judaism" (p. 93). Alternative adherents come from a diversity of backgrounds, including traditional religious homes that "mixed and

The Six Spiritual Stories of College Men (cont.)

matched beliefs from a number of religio-spiritual systems," (Nash, 2001b, p. 94), non-religious families who deemphasized spiritual matters, and religiously-nuetral environments that encouraged exploration and self-discovery for children and adolescents.

The first of these unconventional stories is the **activism narrative**. Also referred to as "social justice activists" (Nash, 2001a), these believers are more concerned with making a positive contribution in the present rather than being preoccupied with the speculative rewards and consequences awaiting individuals in the afterlife. Advocating an "energetic faith dedicated to the liberation of oppressed peoples, equal rights for all, and radical social transformation marked by full democratic participation in decision-making "(Nash, 2001b, p. 96), activists push for social reform in the name of godly justice underscored by a faith-in-action liberation theology. Activist believers might also self-identify with many of the other religio-spiritual narratives, although it is rare for them to align themselves with either the orthodox or wounded narratives. Social justice is the theme that runs through the activist narrative in that "religion makes the most sense whenever it tells a story of human rights and social transformation" (Nash, 2001a, p. 15).

Next, those associated with the **exploration narrative** might be activist in some fashion, but are most often characterized by the spiritual quest that drives the purpose of this study. Nash (2001b) claimed that it was this story that was most common among both undergraduates and graduates at his institution. These explorers reflect the "cry for meaning" (p. 105) at colleges and universities that have incited and excited modern researchers in higher education. Such stories reflect a restless mobility that focuses on process over product, experience over creed, and questions over answers ... best described as a "rolling account of an unfinished spiritual odyssey" (Nash, 2001b, p. 105). Nash (2001b) cited his own inability to clearly define the explorer because of the multifaceted and syncretistic nature of the beliefs. However, the one thing that explorers seem to: "share in common is an infectious sense of wonder, and, in religious matters, they exude a spirit of adventure and experimentation ... (in) the unceasing search to find something to believe in, something to love, something that will tie together the tag-ends of people's chaotic lives" (p. 108, 110).

An emerging subcategory of the explorers is what Nash (2001a) called the mystics, who pursue the transcendent, "not through idle chatter or abstract concepts, but by way of meditation, mindfulness, and above all, a pervasive calmness" (p. 14). In this regard, Nash attempted to classify, with little success, not only the mystics, but also the perspectives of Neo-Paganism and Eastern Mysticism within the explorer narrative. This feat was challenging since the "exploration narrative is the most pluralistic religio-

The Six Spiritual Stories of College Men (cont.)

spiritual story of all" (Nash, 2001b, p. 108). Regardless, explorers all have strong spiritual appetites for personally meaningful spiritual paradigms that will inspire them without defining them. Open-minded, reflective, and spiritually engaged, these true pilgrims are content in embarking on an adventure that is more about the "process of exploring rather than in the act of foreclosing" (Nash, 2001b, p. 109).

The final alternative narrative is, at first glance, in opposition to the previous five narratives, since it finds its source of meaning in rationality and reason as opposed to the sacred and the supernatural. The **secular humanist narrative** is for those who reject the teachings of any organized religion while embracing a "scientific worldview ... a this-worldly (secular) approach to telling a particular story about reality" (Nash, 2001b, p. 116). Moreover, this narrative paradigm is populated with a variety of secular individuals, including existential humanists, postmodern skeptics, and scientific empiricists (Nash, 2001a), who are diverse in their understanding of truth and unique in their expressions of meaning making. However, secular humanists find common ground with one another in their "disdain for absolutisms" (Nash, 2001b. p. 120), skepticism about illogical religious systems, and a no-nonsense commitment to make life work in the here and now. Even Nash himself, in his own self-identification as a "spiritual seeker ... (whose) childhood Catholicism continues to have such a strong hold on me today (2001a, p. 2, 8) ... (who is also) an existential humanist, secular to the core, with a postmodern flair, but also a closet explorer, always looking, forever on the prowl for something more" (2001b, p. 122) resembles and reflects the expansive landscape of ever-growing religio-spiritual narratives that are taking root in our country and finding unique expressions on private and public colleges and universities. Even as the articulator of religio-spiritual narratives, Nash is but one exemplar of the diversity of traditional and alternative stories that are being constructed on college campuses across the country that describe the various ways in which college students examine and express their spiritual journeys.

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CONTEMPLATION

Which one or more of the six stories do you most personally relate about your own spiritual journey?	to as you think
CONVERSATIONS	
What kinds of people (and from which narratives) have you most of throughout your life?	ften encountered
How have your encounters with individuals from one or more of the narratives shaped your experiences and perspectives?	religio-spiritual
Picture a scenario where one PKT brother from each of the six narratogether in your chapter house, when the topic of religion/spiritual What do you imagine might be some of the challenges in the emergand would you have any advice for your brothers on how to proceed conversation with one another?	beliefs comes up. ging conversation?



CONTEXT

At this point in this second module, you have evaluated your own perspectives concerning religion and spirituality, as well as identified which of the six spiritual narratives best fit your personality, preferences, and persuasions. To wrap up this section on evaluating your own spiritual beliefs, you are invited to complete the SQ Assessment and then share the results with trusted friends and family members.



CURRICULUM

The ΦKΘ Spiritual Quotient (SQ) Personal Assessment

Year in College	_		E.1		
1st 2	nd 3	ord 4th	5th		
	-	town as in the			
City	Suburbs	Country			
•	eneration col No	lege student (f	irst of my famil	y to attend co	llege).
-	y and activel No	y involved in re	ligious or spiri	tual practices.	
-	y and activel No	y involved with	a religious or	spiritual comm	unity.
The belief tra	dition that m	y family raised	me within wou	ıld best align v	vith
Jewish	Christian	Muslim	Buddhist	No Tradition	
Protestant	Hindu	Catholic	Mormon	Other	
My present a	nd personal s	piritual orienta	tion would bes	t align with	
Skeptic	Uncertain	Excited	Disinterested	Fearful	On Hold
Done With It	Convinced	Disillusioned	Searching	Open	Other
I would defin	e or describe	spirituality as			
Spirituality is	/ is not (circ	le one) importa	ant to me, beca	use	

The ΦKΘ Spiritual Quotient (SQ) Personal Assessment (cont.)

Put a small ✔ next to whichever statements are true for you right now.

I am interested in spiritual questions.
I am on a spiritual search that is positive or exciting.
I am on a spiritual search that is unsettling or disturbing.
I explore one or more of the spiritual belief systems of the world.
I think about my purpose for being here on this earth.
I think about the differences between various spiritual perspectives.
I think about the possibility of being created by a God/Higher Power.
I believe that human life is affected by spiritual forces.
The idea of life after death seems possible to me.
God/Higher Power gives me strength to face life's challenges.
I feel obligated to follow my parents' religious practices.
I feel disillusioned with my spiritual upbringing.
To feel doubt is a normal phase in spiritual discovery for me.
To feel doubt is a signal of spiritual weakness for me.
I experiment with spiritual practices different from those of my childhood.
If I found a spiritual perspective that fits what I want, I would choose to follow it.
If God exists, I think I would want to connect with this Being.
I feel that I have a personal connection with God/Higher Power.
I seek to be spiritual in my everyday life.
I am involved with a spiritual community at college.
I spend time with at least one close friend who is very spiritual.
I would enjoy having a conversation about spirituality with a friend.
I talk with friends about spiritual topics or ideas.
I have spiritual conversations with fellow students on campus.
I can clearly articulate my most basic spiritual beliefs to a friend.



CONVERSATIONS

Choose one of your closest friends in the chapter with whom you will swap your SQ Assessment to be reviewed by each other. Take some time to talk about the similarities you share and the differences that are interesting, as well as ask each other thoughtful questions of why, who, when, where, and what in regards to your observations of each other's SQ Assessment.



CHOICES

WHO'S WHO IN THE CHAPTER

During a scheduled chapter brotherhood event, invite all the brothers to position themselves standing up in a square facing inward toward one another.

In advance of this activity, have all the brothers complete the SQ Assessment and bring a completed copy with them to the gathering.

Have a volunteer facilitator slowly read outloud the 26 statements at the end of the SQ Assessment... one at a time... inviting members to step forward if that particular statement is true for them.

Example: Step forward if you are "on a spiritual search that is unsettling or disturbing" or step forward if you "feel obligated to follow your parents' religious practices."

After the activity, debrief together on your observations, thoughts, and feelings about the exercise.

CONTEMPLATION

Invest 10-15 minutes to reflect on what you have learned about yourself in regards to your spiritual beliefs, and record a few personal thoughts about the spiritual dimension of your life in this section of the resource guide.					

CHALLENGE

UPWARD

Realize that it is okay to be uniquely you as to think about religion and spirituality, and that you can ponder the existence or non-existence of a Higher Power in a manner that best fits you.

INWARD

Reflect on your own spiritual story and worldview and how your background, past experiences, and evolving beliefs shape your lifestyle choices, relationships, and priorities.

OUTWARD

Reach out and talk to your brothers (and other friends and family members) about facets of your spiritual journey that feel exciting and/or uneasy regarding your own spiritual beliefs. Be transparent and authentic as you articulate your personal thoughts without fearing rejection or judgment.

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MODULE THREE EXPRESS your own spiritual challenges



CONTEXT

For young men, expressing thoughts and feelings can be a difficult feat. Transparency and authenticity with yourself can feel a bit unsettling in general, and this is particularly true when giving voice to the most honest and innermost thoughts about the challenges and conflicts that are associated with your spiritual and/or religious beliefs.

How you make sense of the biggest questions and most perplexing mysteries of life is one of the most personal things about you. In this module, you will go even farther in better understanding your ideas and more equipped to reflect on your personal thoughts in the spiritual dimension of life.

Even more provocative than the spiritual beliefs of the second module are the spiritual

challenges of this section of the resource guide. Get ready to explore the notion of personal faith, as well as the five seasons, five frustrations, and five misperceptions of your unique faith experience.



Does Faith Fit Within My Life?

DEFINING FAITH

An **active** trust and confidence in someone or something to direct when there is darkness, to clarify when there is confusion, to provide when there is a problem, to empower when there is emptiness, and to lead when there is lostness.



CONTEMPLATION

Personally, have you ever felt like you were in a dark place? If so, express these challenges in your own words:
Have you ever felt confused, empty, or lost? If so, express these challenges in your own words:
What do you recall were the three biggest personal problems in your past? What are the three biggest personal problems in your present life?
Whom or what do you trust and place your confidence in when there is darkness, confusion, emptiness, a sense of feeling lost, or the presence of problems in your ife?

Note: Your response to the previous prompt answers this very important question for yourself: Whom or what is the object of my faith?



Five Personal Benefits of Faith

- 1 Closeness to the Ultimate
- 2 Community Connection
- 3 Cause Orientation
- 4 Crisis Management
- 5 Choice Making



CONTEMPLATION

Rank from 1-5 (1=Most & 5=Least) the personal benefits you have experienced from your faith. Feel free to put an X next to the descriptors that do not apply to you.

_____Closeness to the Ultimate (positive relationship with God; good feelings about your interaction with your Divine Source; or personal connection with Higher Being)

_____Community Connection (close friendships with other faith-filled individuals; meaningful spiritual interactions with others; faith experiences that include special people)

_____Cause Orientation (motivation to be a positive force in the world; desire to help or serve individuals or specific communities and populations; commitment to be a catalyst of change where injustices or inequities are present)

_____Crisis Management (finding personal relief when life hurts; experiencing the

alleviation of personal pain and suffering when life is hard; discovering hope when life seems hopeless)

_____ Choice Making (offers value-based template for decision-making; provides compass for direction and focus; clarifies life's mission and purpose)



The Five Seasons of a Man's Faith Journey

FIGURING OUT MY OWN FAITH

Season: Finished with faith Season: Fighting with faith

Season: Failing at faith

Season: Formulating my faith Season: Finding a fit for faith

Note: These five seasons are listed in no particular order, nor is it presumed that all five seasons will be visited during a man's lifetime.



CONTEMPLATION

Which of the five seasons have you personally experienced throughout y when? Which season do you currently find yourself now?	our life and

Next to the five seasons of a man's faith journey... write what age(s) you experienced each particular season (ex: Age 11-13). Some seasons might be left empty and other seasons might have more than one occurrence (ex: Age 11-13, 16-18).

AGE	Finished with Faith
AGE	Fighting with Faith
AGE	Failing at Faith
AGE	Formulating my Faith
AGE	Finding a Fit for Faith

✓ CHOICES

Expression Exercise

PART ONE

Place five containers (each one marked with a different faith season) in the middle of the room. Sitting in a circle around the five containers, a stack of index cards is passed around the circle. Each brother takes an index card for as many of the five seasons as he has experienced firsthand... and on each index card, he writes:

- 1 His name
- **2** The name of the faith season
- **3** What age(s) he experienced this particular season.

Then once everyone in the circle has completed all of their cards... one at a time... brothers stand up and step forward and put the appropriate index card in each matching bucket, as the other brothers watch.

At the conclusion of part one of this exercise, the facilitator invites an open sharing time when brothers talk about what they observed and what they think/how they feel about the experience.

PART TWO

Volunteers retrieve the index cards from each of the five buckets... and then make five distinct stacks of index cards, by sorting the cards into piles where the similar ages are side by side.

Then the facilitator encourages the brothers to listen very carefully as these cards are read aloud, so that brothers can learn of other brothers who experienced the same season of faith at similar times as themselves.

At the conclusion of part two of this exercise, the facilitator invites an open sharing time when brothers talk about what they just experienced and have them brainstorm ideas for future conversations and events that can utilize this new information about the larger brotherhood.



The Five Common Frustrations with Faith

- 1 Relationships (People)
- 2 Regularity (Participation)
- **3** Rituals (Programs)
- 4 Restrictions (Prohibitions)
- **5** Religion (Pressure)



CONTEMPLATION

Have you ever experienced any of these five frustrations? When? Why? With whom?
FIVE SPECIFIC REFLECTIONS Regarding faith, was there anything specific about relationships with people that was
frustrating for you?
Regarding faith, was there anything specific about the regularity or expectation of religious participation that was frustrating for you?

Regarding faith, was there anything specific about the religious rituals or spiritual programs that was frustrating for you?
Regarding faith, were there any unique restrictions or specific activities that were prohibited that were frustrating for you?
Regarding faith, was there any other general religious pressure that was frustrating for you?



CHOICES

Create a large visible chart with five blank sections with each of the five frustrations listed as a heading for each section. This can also be accomplished on a white board or black board. Then have brothers come forward with a marker/pen/chalk and list all of the personal frustrations that they have experienced in each category. If a common frustration appears that relates to more than one brother, simply use hash marks to demonstrate the repetition of this idea. Then have a volunteer facilitate an open discussion about common and unique frustrations.

0

CONTEMPLATION

For you personally, do you see any connections between any of these five frustrations and where you found yourself in any of the five seasons of faith?

Draw lines between the "seasons" and "frustrations" that seem connected for you:

SEASONS	FRUSTRATIONS
Finished with Faith	Relationships (People)
Fighting with Faith	Regularity (Participation)
Failing at Faith	Rituals (Programs)
Formulating my Faith	Restrictions (Prohibitions)
Finding a Fit for Faith	Religion (Pressure)



Five Common Misperceptions about Faith

- 1 Faith is for older grandparents, but not my generation.
- **2** Faith is for followers, but not front-runners.
- **3** Faith is for the struggling, but not the strong.
- **4** Faith is for the simple-minded, but not the smart.
- 5 Faith is for the intolerant, but not the thoughtful.



CONVERSATIONS

As the creator of this resource guide, Dr. Michael Brown unapologetically suggests to you that these five statements about faith are indeed "misperceptions." Do you agree or disagree with his propositions and why? Make your case. *This conversation can take place in a one to one context, within a small group, or as an entire chapter.*



CONTEMPLATION

Have you ever found yourself personally wrestling with these ideas about faith?



CHOICES (OPTIONAL)

If you would consider yourself a follower of Christ, and are willing to consider a fresh start at re-establishing a positive relationship with God, review Dr. Michael's Brown brief thoughts on the notion of **God as my Friend** in Appendix C. Feel free to reflect upon the four principles, four prototypes, four practices, four problems, and four possibilities... individually or as part of a small group discussion as a chapter.

Forward any questions, concerns, or feedback to Dr. Brown directly, as he welcomes any personal interaction with the Phi Kappa Theta community regarding these important matters.

UPWARD

Realize that a relationship with God and/or a connection with a Higher Power can be a very positive experience that should be considered customary for many men, cultivated practically in a variety of ways, cherished by those who find place for faith in their lives, and is accompanied by its unique set of challenges.

INWARD

Reflect on how a personal faith can assist you with life's challenges and provide support in navigating the reality of unmet expectations, pain, suffering, and disappointment of all kinds – as well as help with determining core values, direction in life, and important decisions.

DUTWARD

Reach out and express to your brothers (and other friends and family members) about personal challenges in your faith journey, as well as how your unique faith experience shapes your interactions with others and helps determine the kind of investment you make in the world around you.

ENGAGE

your brothers in spiritual dialogue



CONTEXT

It is now time to move beyond exploring, evaluating, and the self-expression of questions, beliefs, and ideas that relate to the spiritual dimension of your life.

Let's take the next important step to talk outloud with your brothers... and together commit to the exhilarating adventure of engaging in conversations that are real, relevant, and relatable.

This particular module is what inspired the creation of this resource guide: to provide a

comfortable and relaxed environment where pre-planned occasions and spontaneous opportunities occur for Phi Kappa Theta brothers to "explore their natural curiosity about spirituality and individual purpose" and to accentuate the Ritual in "helping medevelop spiritually."	



The Art of Engaging in Meaningful Conversations

These bullet-point ideas are designed to assist PKT brothers in engaging in meaningful conversations with one another where big questions are initiated, significant topics are explored, mutual understanding is cultivated, and differences are appreciated.

WHAT EVERY PKT BROTHER MOST DESIRES IN LIFE

To be known

To be loved

To be trusted

To be empowered

To feel alive



CONTEMPLATION

For yourself, rank each of these desires from 1-5 (1=Most & 5=Least). Feel free to use a ranking designation more than once (ex: you might rank three desires as all 1's and the other two desires as 2's).

To	be	known
To	be	loved
To	be	trusted
To	be	empowered
To	foo	l alive



CONVERSATIONS

Discuss together with your brothers which of these five desires are most satisfied and least satisfied as a member of this particular chapter of Phi Kappa Theta.

The Art of Engaging in Meaningful Conversations (cont.)

EMBARK ON THE JOURNEY OF BECOMING A SKILLED CONVERSATIONALIST

What a skilled conversationalist is

an engaged, encouraging and expressive listener

What a skilled conversationalist is not

a pushy, preachy, proclaimer of personal preferences

APPRECIATE THE INTRINSIC POWER OF GOOD QUESTIONS

Question-asking communicates genuine care

Question-asking expresses humility

Question-asking empowers others to reflect upon their lives

Question-asking encourages others to seek out their personal understanding of truth

Questions solicit questions in return

CULTIVATE A R.I.C.H. PERSONALITY

Relaxed Inquisitive Compassionate Humble



CONTEMPLATION

What is the most meaningful question someone ever asked you?				
What is the most uncomfortable question someone ever asked you?				
Have you ever been asked a question that changed your life in a dramatic way?				
What is the most memorable question you have ever asked another person? And how was your question received and/or answered?				

The Art of Engaging in Meaningful Conversations (cont.)

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR CREATING AN INTERPERSONAL CONNECTION

- 1 Make the goal: being a lifegiver and not a lifetaker
- 2 Listen before talking
- **3** Make eye contact
- 4 Be fully present
- 5 Take off your mask; be yourself
- 6 Listen with your face
- 7 Express what you feel about them
- 8 Ask why a lot
- **9** Keep an eye out for root issues and explore them
- 10 Utilize the phrase: "That is so interesting. Tell me more about that."



CHOICES

Pair up with another brother, sit together, and take turns practicing the following practical tips (one at a time) with each other as you engage in a conversation about any topic:

Practical Tip #2: Listen before talking

Practical Tip #3: Make eye contact

Practical Tip #4: Be fully present

Practical Tip #6: Listen with your face

Practical Tip #7: Express what you feel about them

Practical Tip #8: Ask why a lot

Practical Tip #10: Utilize the phrase: "That is so interesting. Tell me more about that."

Warning: this activity will feel both awkward and a bit unnatural – so relax, laugh a lot, and have fun with this experience as you learn more about yourself.

Q

CONVERSATIONS

Each of these 140 questions (in addition to the hundreds of questions listed in Appendix A) are perfect for a **Twenty-Minute Question of the Week Chapter Discussion** that is a high-impact and low-hassle event... and requires only two things:

1) a day, time, and place to meet and 2) a brother who is willing to select a question and gather brothers together to talk about their personal thoughts in response to the question.

Categories & Catalog of Questions for Fraternal Discussions

About an individual's background (family, childhood, life experiences)

- Where did you grow up?
- What was the hardest thing about growing up for you?
- **?** Tell me about your family.
- Where did you go to high school? What kinds of things were you involved with then?
- What do your parents do for their careers?
- Oo you have a boyfriend or girlfriend? Tell me about your relationship.
- What do you miss most about home, now that you're at college?
- How well did you get along with your siblings?
- Are you parents married or divorced? How has their relationship affected you?
- What about their marriage would you like to also emulate? What about their marriage would you like to do differently in your long-term relationships?
- ? Have you ever attended religious services? Tell me about your religious background. In what ways has that experience been positive or negative for you?
- Where have you traveled? What was your favorite place and why?
- ? How would you describe your present relationship with your family?
- What order are you in your family? Did you like that? How do you anticipate your birth order has affected you?
- Output
 How many times did you move while growing up? What was your favorite place that you lived?

- Were pets a part of your upbringing?
- Who was your best friend growing up? Is she or he still your best friend? Why or why not?
- What was your first job?
- Where did you and your family vacation?
- **?** What is your favorite memory growing up?
- What is your worst memory growing up?
- What was the most frightening memory of your childhood?
- ? Have you ever been close to death as a kid?
- What about your family has had the greatest impact on you?
- What is the most important lesson you learned from Mom? Dad?
- What kind of family did your parents come from? Do they act like your grandparents? How or how not?
- Who are you closest to in your family and why?
- What was the one thing you would have wished your dad would have said to you growing up, but he never did?
- What was the one thing you would have wished your mom would have said to you growing up, but he never did?
- O Do you have any special family traditions growing up?
- ? How did your family celebrate the different holidays? Christmas? Thanksgiving? Easter?
- ? Tell me about your relationship with your grandparents.
- When growing up, what kinds of things did you do over summer break?
- What were your hobbies as a kid? Are they still your hobbies today?
- What one event in your life has most shaped you for good or bad?
- If you could change one thing about your childhood what would it be?

Asking an individual's advice or opinion

- Who is your hero?
- What do you think of the President?
- ? What political party would you affiliate yourself with and why?
- What do you think of religious people you've met? Best interaction and worst interaction?
- If there were one thing you would change about our world, what would it be?
- ? How do you think we should get rid of terrorism?
- Which religion do you like the best? The least? And why?
- What is the most important lesson parents should teach their kids?
- What kind of music do you listen to? And why?
- What would be your advice to the couple that just broke up, and they want to know how to get over it in a quick and healthy way?
- Who do you think was/is the most influential spiritual leader in the world?
- ② Do you think there is one absolute truth? How do you know if it's true?
- What are the three major goals for your life?
- If you could describe God in a sentence or two, what would your description be?
 What do you think about the institution of marriage?
- ② Do you think there is an after-life? And if so, where do people go after they die?
- After graduating from college, where do you want to live?
- Have you ever read any sacred spiritual text? Which one(s) and what was your impression?
- What are your thoughts about abortion?
- What are your thoughts about the death penalty?
- What you think about (particular television show)?
- What do you think about (particular book)?
- How old should you be before you date?

- Oo you think the drinking age is fair and beneficial?
- In your opinion, what is the best place to take a date?
- What is the one quality that you would most want in a spouse?
- ② Do you believe in evolutionism or creationism?
- ② Do you want to have kids? How many, do you think?
- What kind of characteristics do you look for in a friend?
- ? How do you define "best friend?"
- How do you envision heaven?
- ? How do you envision hell?
- What keeps you motivated to make it through each day?
- When you wake up in the morning what helps you get out of bed?
- ? I've got (this problem) how would you deal with it?
- Who is your favorite author?
- ② Do you think aliens exist? Is there life on other planets?
- When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up? Is that still your aspiration?
- Which emotion is most frightening or uncomfortable for you?

Involving an individual's imagination

- If you could rule the world, what would you do first?
- If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?
- If you could meet one person, who would it be?
- What would be your perfect job?
- If you won a million dollars, how would you spend it?
- If you knew you had three months to live, how would you spend your last 90 days?
- If you could change one thing about your personality, what would it be?
- ? If you could change one thing about your physical appearance, what would it be?
- What age would you be again and why?

- What time period in history would you like to visit?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- Oescribe for me your perfect day.
- ? If you were God, what would be your first task?
- **?** If you had one question that could get a definite answer, what would it be? How would you spend your time, if you never had to work again?
- ? If you could take one book to take on an island, what would it be?
- If you could bring one person back from the dead, who would it be and why?
- ? If you could change one thing about our campus, what would it be?
- You have unlimited resources and manpower what problem would you fix and how?
- If you could be anyone, who would it be?
- If you could ask God one question what would it be?
- If you could be famous, what would you want to be famous for?
- If you had to choose one, would you rather find a cure for AIDS or cancer?
- Who do you most want to meet in heaven? How do you know they'll be there?
- How do you want people to remember you?
- What do you want your parents? Friends? Kids? Spouse? to say about you at your funeral?
- If you could travel back in history and ask one person one question who would it be and what's the question?
- How would you describe the perfect family? Marriage? Relationship?
- What would you do if a meteor were about to hit the earth?
- **?** If you could be a sports star what would the sport be?
- If you could own one car, what would it be and what would it look like?
- Is there something that you could never forgive someone for?
- Would you be open to marrying someone of a different ethnicity?

Asking for an individual's emotional responses (How would you feel...?)

- ? How would you feel if your parents/roommates/best friend died?
- ? How would you feel if someone told you they loved you unconditionally and always would?
- ? How did you feel when you first fell in love?
- ? How would you feel if you and your best friend were fighting?
- What makes you most happy? What makes you most sad?
- When are you most afraid?
- What circumstance would have the greatest potential of setting you off?
- ? How do you deal with grief?
- How do you feel about moving away from home and becoming independent?
- ? How do you feel about graduating from college?
- ? How would you feel if someone close to you committed suicide?
- How would you feel if you lost all your money?
- ? How would you feel if you found out you had terminal cancer?
- How would you feel if you had to move away from all your friends or family?
- How did you personally react to September 11, 2001?
- How would you feel if your best friend told you he or she were gay?
- What are you doing when you most feel alive?
- As a guy what most makes you feel most like a man?
- Would you rather be deaf or blind, if you had to choose and why?
- If you were to witness a murder how do you think you would respond?
- How would you feel if your parents were getting a divorce?
- How would you feel about the effects of alcohol on people's behavior?
- How do your friends make you feel about yourself?

Inquiring about an individual's spiritual journey

- ② Do you see any difference between religion and spirituality? If so, what is the difference? How might religion and spirituality interact or be connected?
- ? Did you have any religious background growing up? Tell me more.
- ? Did [if so, when] your parent's/community's/friends' faith become your own?
- What do you think God is like? Describe this Being for me.
- If you could ask God just one question what would it be?
- (In reference to whatever current news event) ask: What part do you think God plays in what is going on right now?
- What do you feel is the role of religious institutions in this day and age?
- Have you ever met a religious individual whose life didn't match their message? Explain.
- **?** What is the most significant contribution that Jesus Christ/Muhammad/Buddha made to our world today?
- If someone would ask you, "How can I become a Muslim?" what would you tell her or him? If someone would ask you, "How can I become Buddhist?" what would you tell him or her? [The same with Christian, Jewish, etc.]



CONTEXT

Many of the questions listed in the previous section are lighthearted and/or enjoyable to chat about with friends or family members. However, there will be certain questions that will trigger disruptive or defensive feelings inside of you.

When this happens, you will need to review the Six Guidelines for Controversial Conversations as highlighted in this next section and try to apply these helpful hints in your interactions with others.

At this point, I pose the question: Has the renewed emphasis on critical thinking (particularly on the college campus), helped us to evolve into a better version of ourselves? In the attempt to expose errors in others' thinking and achieve intellectual superiority, what has been the cost? In light of the toxic vibe permeating social media, do young men know how to artfully engage in dialogue and discussions about politics, social issues, and religious ideas in a way that is inspiring and uplifting, or have they been socialized to be close-minded and combative?

Dr. Michael Brown (influenced by Drs. Robert Nash and Carney Strange) offers a different paradigm for fraternal dialogue, where mutual understanding, empathy, and compassion trump winning the argument... as noted in the next curriculum section.



CURRICULUM

Six Guidelines for Controversial Conversations

1. Telling someone what you believe is not the same as discussing beliefs.

"Turn down the volume in our moral conversations by turning up our empathy meters."

Six Guidelines for Controversial Conversations (cont.)

- 2. Every belief deserves at least initial respect.
 - Have confidence that the person knows what they are talking about.
 - Have confidence that what they say is worthwhile in some way.
 - At least consider the possibility that you are wrong, and be willing to critique your own beliefs.
 - Have confidence that the other person means well.
- 3. The Golden Rule: be willing to see the problems in what you believe, and the truth in what you oppose.

See the good in others' perspectives, and the pitfalls of your own.

4. All-or-nothing, either-or thinking is always a threat to meaningful moral conversation.

The idea of "either you are with me or against me" does not leave room for discussion and finding common ground.

5. Since who we are is shaped by our past, each of us has a different idea of what constitutes religious and spiritual truth.

So, it would be wise for us to try and understand the backgrounds of others as we try to understand what they believe.

6. Find the balance between being true to yourself and being open to new perspectives.

For some of us, our beliefs are so precious that to doubt them seems like being dishonest with ourselves. However, at the very least we must respect one another, grow to understand one another, and even find some common ground.

Six Guidelines for Controversial Conversations (cont.)

A FEW ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Don't think of things as you or me, but "we."
- Respond instead of react.
- Try not to enter a discussion thinking there will be a winner or loser; more often than not, discussion will be more helpful than debate.
- Many disagreements and negative feelings come from misunderstanding so ask questions!
- Speak about things personally, not from the viewpoint of an impersonal cause.
- Have patience with one another.
- Listen to what others have to say; don't just wait for your turn to speak.
- Discussions are two-way, give-and-take; talk with, not at, others.

Adapted by Dr. Michael Brown from:

Nash, R. J. (2001). Religious pluralism in the academy: Opening the dialogue. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Nash, R. J., Bradley, D. L., & Chickering, A. W. (2008). How to talk about hot topics on campus: From polarization to moral conversation. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.



CONTEMPLATION

As you interact with your brothers, which guideline(s) do you think is the greatest challenge for your friends to apply in controversial conversations within your particu chapter?	lar
Which guideline(s) is most difficult for you to personally apply?	

CHALLENGE

UPWARD

Realize that engaging in spiritual dialogue with trusted comrades and confidants will enable you to better cultivate your personal relationship with God and/ or your sense of connection with a Divine Other. The common notion that faith is a private matter that should be kept away from others, even those closest to us, is in conflict as to how we are wired for community. Our vertical relationship with a Higher Power is accentuated and strengthened by our vertical relationships with other human beings.

INWARD

Reflect on your personal communication style, in general, as well as your posture and attitude when talking with others about controversial and emotionally charged topics. Growing into a competent and compassionate conversationalist is absolutely one of the most important skills for a happy and productive life.

OUTWARD

Reach out and engage with your brothers (and other friends and family members) on a regular basis about the big ideas and important questions of life. Take the lead to initiate and facilitate opportunities where others can speak about their honest thoughts, while ensuring that their perspectives will be heard, appreciated, and valued... even when there is difference of opinion.

MODULE FIVE EXAMINE your own spiritual biases



CONTEXT

In the previous module, there were abundant opportunities to engage in the tricky task of talking to one another about meaningful and often controversial topics that you are continually interpreting and updating inside of your head and heart.

Furthermore, as you experienced through the various exercises, honest communication can feel challenging (particularly as your personal perspective and philosophy of life continues to evolve and expand), but it is a skill that can be fine-tuned with repetition and practice.

In this next section, you are invited to engage in some rigorous self-reflection

where you will examine the underlying causes and unseen sources for some of your potential aversion to spiritual ideas and/or awkwardness when exposed to religious conversations.

Spiritual Bias #1: Problem of Pain & Suffering

What to do when life sucks!

As human beings, we tend to avoid pain like the plague and suffering as if it were a deadly disease. We hate it and avoid it at all costs. We try to manage our personal lives and professional careers in such a way that difficulty and devastation keep their distance.

Consequently, when the inevitable happens, and pain touches our lives and suffering messes with our well-constructed plans, we use this sucky reality to justify snubbing the spiritual dimension of our lives.

CHARACTERIZATION OF PAIN

Pain is a perceived unfortunate, unpleasant and/or unanticipated experience associated with hurt or harm to self.

Contemplation: Are you surprised when pain or suffering intersects with your life? Why or why not?		
COMPREHENSION OF PAIN		
Pain is Common		
Pain is Complex		
Pain is Complicated		
Contemplation: Which of the three realities about pain and suffering resonates most with you?		

Dysfunctional Family Drama	Strained Platonic Friendships
Failed Romantic Relationships	Physical Affliction
Emotional Turmoil Personal Failure	Job Stress Unmet Expectations
Unfulfilled Desires	Unachieved Goals
Private Disappointment	Shattered Dreams
	f the 12 categories of pain that have most dramatically on here in this resource guide, and in a sentence or nario.
1	
2	
3	
CAUSES OF PAIN Human Condition Hurtful Circumstances Harmful Choices	
Contemplation: Which of these suffering in your life?	e three causes do you most blame for the pain and
CONSEQUENCES OF PAIN Confusion Conflict Conviction Change	
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	and suffering in your life most often create confusion, your personal convictions, or prompt change to elf?

CATEGORIES OF PAIN

CRITICAL REACTIONS

Explain Pain Escape Pain Eradicate Pain

Contemplation: These three critical reactions are not typically the most helpful responses to pain and suffering in your life. What has been your experience with these three strategies?
CONSTRUCTIVE REPONSES Express Pain Educated by Pain Embrace Pain
○ Contemplation: These three constructive reactions have often been most beneficial in dealing with pain and suffering in life. What has been your experience with these three strategies?
PRINCIPLES FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT Life becomes less difficult when we realize life is difficult. Pain should invite a response, but not a reaction. The pain we seek to avoid is life's most transformative teacher. Pain is not the primary enemy to joy and contentment.
Contemplation: What are your personal reflections in response to the four principle of pain management noted here?
1 Life becomes less difficult
2 Respond, but not react
3 Pain as transformative teacher
4. Pain is not the enemy



CONVERSATIONS

Schedule a *What to Do When Life Sucks* Brotherhood event... and design a two-hour experience where the brothers honestly interact about the various principles, problems, and practices associated with pain and suffering in their lives, since every brother in every chapter struggles with this issue and a potential spiritual bias against developing in the spiritual dimension of his life.



CHOICES

Create a *When Life Sucks* Journal to record your thoughts when life feels painful, difficult, or frustrating... to create a space to vent and process your personal thoughts. Be sure to date each journal entry and then respond to this prompt at the conclusion of each section: *What attitude will I choose, and what choices will I make in response to this painful situation?*

Spiritual Bias #2: Lack of a Moral Compass

The notion of morality has been marginalized in this day and age, which has created a host of personal problems for young men who have prioritized the demand for *immediate gratification* over and above the establishment of *healthy boundaries*.

Unfortunately, the concept of a moral compass has been closely associated with religion and its various rules, duties, and obligations. The sense that morality must be rooted in religious belief has become an obstacle and bias to many spiritual seekers and skeptics from cultivating the spiritual dimension of their lives.

MORALITY DEFINED

Morality focuses on an individual's perspective about values, priorities, and ethics (right, wrong, good, bad, and best) - that when considered will shape private choices and public conduct.

FOUR MORALITY PROBLEMS

- 1 Passivity and apathy
- 2 Preoccupation with pleasure
- **3** Failure to delay immediate gratification
- 4 No compelling vision for life

FOUR MORALITY PRINCIPLES

- 1 I am what I continually do.
- 2 I will not wake up one day having become someone I have not been becoming.
- **3** Each moment matters.
- 4 Live every day with the end in mind.

FIVE SUGGESTED MORAL ACTION POINTS

- 1 Determine your ethical principles regarding what is right, wrong, good, and bad.
- 2 Daily review your top three values and allow those values to dictate your decisions.
- 3 Create a funeral journal followed by the construction of a personal mission statement.
- 4 Schedule your week's activities in light of your values and vision.
- 5 Tell the truth all the time: to yourself and to others.

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CONTEMPLATION

Rank from 1-4 (1=Most & 4=Least) how often the four morality problems materialize in your life.

Passivity and apathy
Preoccupation with pleasure
Failure to delay immediate gratification
No compelling vision for life



CONVERSATIONS

At a meeting or event, engage in a conversation about the possibility of establishing three moral virtues for the chapter that every initiated brother could commit to personally and live out practically.



CHOICES

The 30-Day Experiment

Review the five suggested moral action points and select just one recommended practice to focus on in your life for 30 days!

Spiritual Bias #3: Cultural Differences & Discomfort

Speaking of triggers for spiritual bias, diverse people and perspectives make all of us somewhat nervous, whether we admit it or not. Every young man has his triggers: those comments, encounters, beliefs, or differences that cause us to recoil and look away, or in some cases, fight back. The root of all spiritual bias within this cultural dimension is fear. Period. One hundred percent of the time.

CULTURAL DIMENSION

The cultural dimension focuses on an individual's background and beliefs that consciously and subconsciously shapes perspective about who I am, where I come from, and how I fit in.

CULTURAL IDENTITY CATEGORIES

Race

Ethnicity

Nationality

Geography

Family Values

Sexual Orientation

Gender Identification

Religious/Spiritual/Secular Ideology

Political Persuasions

Education Level

Disability

CULTURAL CONVERSATION CHALLENGES

Passivity

Prejudice

Pride

Panic

Preoccupation

CULTURAL GROWTH CHOICES

- ✓ Identify life lessons, relationship patterns, life habits, and unspoken norms from your family of origin and how your upbringing has affected you today in each of the twelve dimensions.
- ✓ Seek to better understand your personal connection to a particular race, identity, geography, ethnicity, or nationality and decide in what ways you will incorporate these cultural components into your present and future life.
- Exert the necessary energy to expose and decode your own personal prejudices and stereotypes towards others.
- ✓ Explore new places and engage with people different from yourself.



CONTEMPLATION

Assign a grade (A, B, C, D or F) to each of the eleven cultural identity categories, based upon how you feel each identifier triggers discomfort or fear for you personally.

Example: Assign an A to those factors that activate your emotions the strongest when you encounter differences, and assign an F to categories for which you never experience a negative reaction to diversity.

Race
Ethnicity
 Nationality
 Geography
Family Values
 Sexual Orientation
 Gender Identification
 Religious/Spiritual/Secular Ideolog
 Political Persuasions
 Education Level
Disability



CONVERSATIONS

Share with one or two trusted Phi Kappa Theta brothers any of the cultural categories that cause you the most personal challenge (Graded A's or B's).

✓ CHOICES

PERSONAL CHOICE

The 30-Day Experiment

Review the four cultural growth choices and select just one recommended practice to focus on in your life for 30 days!

FRATERNAL CHOICE

Encountering Diversity Exercise

Plan a brotherhood event where every brother gathers together to learn more about the various cultural differences represented among the members of the chapter. Each brother takes as many index cards as he chooses to share about himself. On one side of the card, he writes the descriptor (ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, etc.) and on the other side of the card, he writes the specific details of that descriptor (Indian, bisexual, dyslexia, etc.).

Each participant will use masking tape to hang the cards on the front of his body with the general descriptor visible to others and the specific details turned inward and hidden from view. The activity is to walk around the room mingling together and observing the various cultural identifiers displayed on each of the chapter members. Then in the second phase of the exercise, brothers are encouraged to approach other brothers and initiate conversations with one another and ask permission to know more about their personal cultural differences. (Example: "Joe, do I have your permission to know more specifically about your disability?" or "James, I would like to know more about your religious ideology. Can I turn over your card?").

Obviously, the goal is to kickstart a conversation that might last for a few minutes or more, depending on the individual's willingness to share in response to the listener's questions about the cultural differences.

To conclude the event, it is suggested that everyone sit together and debrief the activity with a series of questions, such as "How does this exercise affect your feelings about your brothers and/or the chapter in general? What were some of the cultural commonalities and differences that were discovered about each other? Share with the group when you felt excited to learn something about another brother and maybe a time when you felt a bit uncomfortable?"

Important Note: When sharing together as a larger group, do not share specific details about another brother's cultural identity (without his permission), as it is possible that someone shared personal information with a few select brothers that he would rather not share with the entire chapter.

CURRICULUM

Spiritual Bias #4: Faith as a Private Matter

The most powerful environment for spiritual development is in the context of a close community of brothers. However, many young men are prone to think that religious convictions and spiritual beliefs are too personal to share with family and friends.

This spiritual bias can be overcome by choosing to take risks in speaking outloud about spiritual ideas and publicly living out the choices within the spiritual dimension of life alongside of close companions. Spiritual staleness and sourness are inevitable for those brothers who isolate themselves from making a personal investment in a close spiritual brotherhood.

FIVE QUALITIES OF A DYNAMIC SPIRITUAL BROTHERHOOD

- 1 Spiritual (Acts 2:42)
- **2** Sharpening (Proverbs 27:17)
- **3** Stimulating (Hebrews 10:23-25)
- 4 Smart (I Thessalonians 5:14)
- **5** Safe (James 5:16)

Note: While each of these five qualities are accentuated by Biblical references, dynamic spiritual community is not exclusively a Christian idea and can be experienced within the context of diverse religious and spiritual traditions.

FIVE REASONS WE RESIST SPIRITUAL BROTHERHOOD

- 1 We are accustomed to self-sufficiency
- **2** We are slow to risk
- 3 We are nervous about conflict
- 4 We are terrified of weakness
- 5 We are wired to hide

FIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR CULTIVATING A DYNAMIC SPIRITUAL BROTHERHOOD

- 1 Formally meet together
- 2 Informally gather together
- 3 Intentionally pursue one another
- 4 Authentically share personal stories, successes, struggles, storms, scars, skeletons, and secrets with one another
- 5 Purposefully encourage and challenge one another

Do you prefer to privately reflect or publicly express your personal viewpoints and choices regarding religion and/or spirituality? What do you believe has most shaped that preference?
Can you personally relate to one or more of the five reasons for young men being cautious or even critical about a spiritual brotherhood?

✓ CHOICES

The Secrets Box

If you want to deepen dramatically the sense of close community in any chapter, this exercise is a successful and time-tested activity. Place a locked Secrets Box in a prominent place within the chapter house. This box should have a small slit in the top to accommodate index cards and a pad lock with the key kept in safekeeping by the Vice President of Spiritual Development.

For one week, the brothers are encouraged to place anonymous index cards in the box that record a personal secret, a personal scar, a personal skeleton, a personal storm, or a personal struggle about themselves (one comment per card with no limit on how many cards can be submitted by any individual).

At the end of the one-week period, the brothers gather together for a very serious (no silliness), sacred (no sarcasm) and somber (no shenanigans) event where the VP of Spiritual Development unlocks the box and slowly and audibly reads every index card in the box.

The brothers are then invited to process together what they heard and how they feel. As part of this community experience, brothers will be offered the opportunity to publicly connect their names to some of the secrets, scars, skeleton, storms, and struggle cards that were read outloud.

Ideally, as the activity progresses and brothers both affirm and accept those who are being transparent with the group, more and more brothers will feel comfortable doing the same.

DEFINING TERMS

Secrets: those present-tense parts of our lives that we keep private

Scars: those insecurities and injuries that we disregard or disguise

Skeletons: those past experiences that we lock away in closets

Storms: those trials and difficulties that unexpectedly swept into life

Struggles: those weaknesses that prove to be a constant personal battle

CHALLENGE

UPWARD

Realize that God is for you, and is in no way biased against you, and that you are unconditionally valued by the Divine Being. Granted, depending on your religious and spiritual worldview, you will relate with your Higher Power uniquely, based upon your distinct beliefs and perceptions about this Ultimate Source, but you need not be apprehensive or fearful in cultivating this Spiritual Relationship.

INWARD

Reflect on how and why any of your preconceived notions about God, the world, and human beings have contributed to any possible biases, prejudices, labels, or stereotypes that have created impediments to your own spiritual growth or disrupted your interactions with others who are on a different spiritual path.

OUTWARD

Reach out and admit your own spiritual or religious biases in the presence of your brothers (and other friends and family members). Most importantly, refuse to ever speak or post demeaning or divisive comments that mischaracterize others' viewpoints or devalue their humanity.



CONTEXT

You are at your core a spiritual being. Unquestionably, there is more to you than meets the eye. However, the manner in which live out your spiritual identity will be shaped by a variety of unique factors that have been highlighted in the earlier sections of this resource guide.

Granted, the manner in which you explore ultimate questions, evaluate spiritual beliefs, express spiritual challenges, engage others in spiritual dialogue, and examine spiritual biases will be unique to you as a result of your personality and preferences.

Furthermore, the embodiment of your own spiritual values is inevitable... either

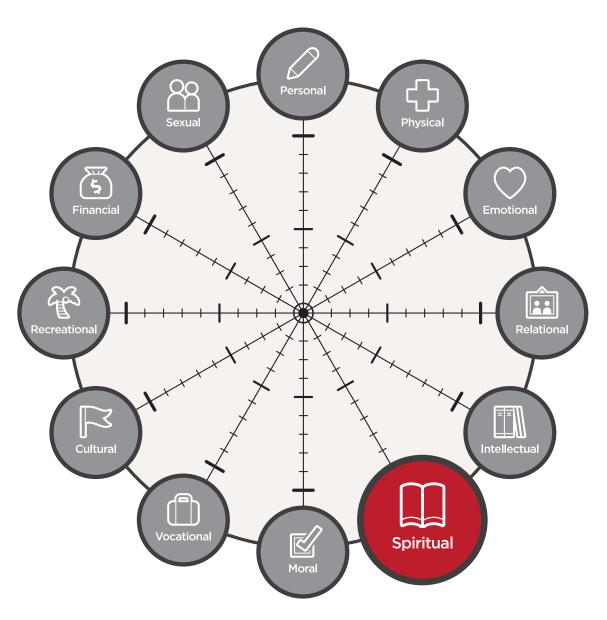
consciously or unconsciously intentionally or unintentionally. This next module is focused primarily on you and who you are choosing to become in the spiritual dimension of your life.			



CURRICULUM

To set the stage for this section, a review of the Twelve Dimensions® of a Man's Life is relevant and provides important insight into the potential impact of the Spiritual Dimension on the other eleven dimensions of life. As you might imagine, each of the twelve dimensions do not ripen or mature in a vacuum, but are each interconnected to one another.

The 12 Dimensions of Life



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CONTEMPLATION

For you personally, how do you imagine the spiritual dimension intersects with the other eleven dimensions of your life?

Invest a few extra minutes to really consider and record how your spiritual and/or religious perspectives, preferences, priorities, and problems effect the whole of you. What influence does the spiritual dimension have on your Personal Dimension, in regards to your personality, strength-talent themes, and core values? What influence does the spiritual dimension have on your **Physical Dimension**, in regards to your choices about food consumption, exercise routines, and sleep patterns? What influence does the spiritual dimension have on your **Emotional Dimension**, in regards to your choices to manage positive and negative feelings that are a normal part of life?

What influence does the spiritual dimension have on your Relational Dimension , in regards to your choices in connecting with family, friends, acquaintances, strangers, and romantic partners?
What influence does the spiritual dimension have on your Intellectual Dimension , in regards to your choices as it pertains to reading, learning, and thinking?
What influence does the spiritual dimension have on your Moral Dimension , in regards to your personal mission and sense of calling in life?
What influence does the spiritual dimension have on your Vocational Dimension , in regards to your choice of educational pursuits and career aspirations?

What influence does the spiritual dimension have on your Cultural Dimension , in regards to how you think about your family background, race, ethnicity, nationality, geographical upbringing (rural or urban), and political viewpoints?
What influence does the spiritual dimension have on your Recreational Dimension , in regards to your choices regarding rest, relaxation, leisure activities, hobbies, and what constitutes fun?
What influence does the spiritual dimension have on your Financial Dimension , in regards to your choices about spending, saving, investing, budgeting, debt, and charitable giving?
What influence does the spiritual dimension have on your Sexual Dimension , in regard to your sexual orientation as well as choices about sexual boundaries, preferences, and activities?

Honest Reflection: As you think about how you might desire to connect/relate your unique spiritual values to all twelve dimensions of your life, is there anything you hope to change or wish to be different after contemplating how the spiritual dimension currently influences and interacts with the entirety of who you are becoming?		

CURRICULUM

Four Practical Steps to Developing Your Spiritual Dimension

1. EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS

Investigate and Inquire

Choices

- ✓ Review the comprehensive website: www.beliefnet.com for inspiration from a variety of perspectives, world religions, and ideologies, as well as take the Belief-O-Matic® Quiz to determine which faith best fits with you.
- ✓ Read a sampling of sacred literature (Bible, Quran, Book of Mormon, etc.) from a variety of world religions.
- ✓ Visit different places of worship (such as churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues) to experience new places and meet new people.

2. EXPERIMENT WITH OPPORTUNITIES

Tryout and Test

Choices

- ✓ Practice Prayer
- ✓ Become Familiar with Fasting
- ✓ Initiate 24 Hours of Solitude & Silence
- ✓ Study Mindfulness and Meditation

3. EVALUATE YOUR OPINIONS

Reflect and Ruminate

Choices

- Start spiritual dimension journal to record your thoughts and track your progress.
- Set aside 15 minutes each day to think about your spiritual beliefs and values.
- Commit to writing 750 words every day about your life and experiences at www.750words.com.

Four Practical Steps to Developing Your Spiritual Dimension (cont.)

4. EXPRESS TO OTHERS

Converse and Chat

Choices

- ✓ Invite others to explore and experiment with you.
- ✔ Create a small group to meet weekly for spiritual discussions.
- ✓ Talk to older family members about your evolving spiritual journey.



CURRICULUM

Short Summary of Six Spirituality Starters

- 1 Rehearse gratitude at all times and in every challenging circumstance.
- **2** Practice moment-by-moment mindfulness.
- **3** Reflect on your personal responses to a list of the big questions of life.
- 4 Share your spiritual and/or religious ideas with trusted mentors and peers.
- 5 Practice personal meditation and/or prayer for 15 minutes each day.
- 6 Spend time with a spiritual community of people who are genuine, accepting, and challenging.

CHALLENGE

UPWARD

Realize that you can seek out perspective and power from your Higher Power in order to make the choices required to grow into the spiritual individual you desire for yourself.

INWARD

Reflect on what is your next step to maximize the spiritual dimension of your life, as well as identify the potential obstacles that need to be addressed and overcome in order for you to personify the best version of your spiritual self.

OUTWARD

Reach out to likeminded peers and wise mentors to provide assistance and accountability in your adventure to strengthen the spiritual dimension of your life. Remember that you are not alone on this journey!

EXPERIMENT with spiritual activities



CONTEXT

In a day and age when world politics and social issues are shaped by religious ideologies, when spiritual interest is fueled by the uncertainty of chaotic and unpredictable global scenarios, and when most young men feel devoid of mentors who can help them navigate the vexing terrain of the spiritual questioning process, Phi Kappa Theta has become a pioneer in the important task of assisting their members in spiritual meaning making and the art of religious dialogue.

By encouraging undergraduates and alumni to experiment with spiritual activities as integral to their Phi Kappa Theta lifelong experience, three immediate benefits emerge.

Experimentation...

- Produces Challenge. Brothers in all seasons and stations of life will benefit from engaging in thought-provoking and growth-producing spiritual conversations and choices. It is much safer to avoid discussions about faith, but that is not who were are as an organization. We will move past the barrier of complacency and overcome the obstacle of passivity to welcome the challenge of other perspectives.
- Piques Curiosity. We want our members to be curious and inquisitive thinkers who approach complex issues with compassionate sensitivity. As we engage with human beings who look and think and believe differently than we do, our hope is that we would lean into each story with a humble and teachable spirit to learn something new and listen intently to how others make sense of the world.
- **Promotes Community.** Our formal and informal spiritual environments should be places where a rich diversity of ideas, creeds, questions, and beliefs are welcome. As a result, these spaces within Phi Kappa Theta chapters will push us far beyond mere tolerance towards transparent and authentic community.

The 14 Spiritual Preferences of Young Men

As you encourage spiritual experimentation within your chapter, be aware that young men traditionally exhibit 14 preferences when personally engaging in the process of spiritual development. Keep these preferences in mind as you develop spiritual initiatives, events, and activities.

- 1 spirituality over religion
- 2 relationships over ritual
- 3 people over programs
- 4 principles over rules
- 5 mentors over teachers
- **6** conversations over presentations
- 7 life laboratories over long lectures
- 8 dialogue over demands
- 9 process over product
- 10 communities over crowds
- 11 experiences over experts
- 12 honesty and humility over pride and pretension
- **13** stories over sermons
- 14 trusted truth-tellers over reluctant relativists



Which of these 14 preferences most resonate with you personally?		
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	_	



Three Notable Benefits of Recruiting Men of Faith

Research underscores that college men who prioritize spiritual development in their own lives outpace their male peers in at least three notable areas:

- 1 Emotional & Mental Well-Being
- 2 Strong Leadership Abilities
- **3** Academic Performance



What would be the immediate benefits to recruiting spiritually wired men into your brotherhood based upon this compelling research?
What might prompt hesitancy or concern among older members in the chapter when recruiting spiritual students?

CURRICULUM

The Seven Spiritual Hallmarks of the Most Successful Chapters

Imbedded within this spiritual development resource guide are creative educational components that Dr. Michael Brown has utilized with thousands of college students over the past two decades as a scholar and practitioner in a variety of campus ministry contexts.

He has been significantly influenced by Dr. Sharon Parks and her vision for a "mentoring community" that promotes and encourages the meaning-making process she denotes as "faithing," or for the purposes of Phi Kappa Theta, framed as "spiritual development." Such communities recognize, challenge, support, and inspire those within them.

Accordingly, they do so through a template of seven community characteristics designed to nurture spiritual questioning and faith development in college students' lives, at a time when they are paramount, by:

- 1 Creating a network of belonging
- 2 Posing big enough questions
- **3** Offering encounters with otherness
- 4 Nurturing habits of the mind
- 5 Exploring worthy dreams
- 6 Accessing powerful images
- 7 Being communities of practice at hearth, table, and commons

REFERENCE

Parks, S. D. (2000). Big questions, worthy dreams: Mentoring young adults in their search for meaning, purpose, and faith. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Collectively, these seven spiritual hallmarks (or ingredients) are inadvertently present within the most successful chapters across the country, and Dr. Brown is convinced that **spiritual vitality** in its various expressions is the **gold standard** that distinguishes chapters who thrive versus those chapters who merely survive.

✓ CHOICES

Catalogue of Thirty Spiritual Experiments

Under the leadership of Spiritual Alumni Mentors and Undergraduate Vice Presidents of Spiritual Development, Phi Kappa Theta brothers can choose to participate and engage in a variety of experimental spiritual activities that might include a broad assortment of chapter discussions, brotherhood events, reflective exercises, service projects, field trips, and immersion experiences.

The goal of such experimentation is to encourage personal and fraternal spiritual development as emphasized by the Fraternity's Founding Fathers and currently reprioritized by both the Fraternity and Foundation Board Members, as well as Professional Staff.

The catalogue of "faithing" or meaning making experiments are situated within the seven hallmarks of *mentoring communities* (Parks, 2000) listed below:

1 Creating a Network of Belonging

Mentoring Relationships, Conversation Clubs, Spiritual Development Social Media Group, Spiritual Partners, and Circles of Trust

2 Posing Big Enough Questions

Genealogies and Life Maps, Big Questions Blog, Big Questions Cafes, and Moral Conversation Nights

3 Offering Encounters with Otherness

Interfaith Dialogues, Multi-Generational Encounters, Panels of Perplexity, and Tours of Spiritual Places & People

4 Encouraging Habits of Mind

Current Event Chat Sessions, Wednesday Workshops, and Book Clubs

5 Exploring Worthy Dreams

Journey Journals, Question of the Week, 'Saving the Planet' Service Projects, and 'Serving the People' Service Projects

6 Accessing Images

Nature Encounters, Art Adventures, Music Meditation, Sacred Religious Literature Study Groups, Everyday Spirituality Exercises, and Faith in Film Excursions

7 Being Communities of Practice

Spiritual Discipline Workshops, Exploration Field Trips, Dinner for Eight, Clearness Committees, and Spiritual Retreats

Note: While many of these thirty spiritual activities are self-explanatory, there are several experiments listed here that will require further explanation and additional coaching. Feel free to reach out to Dr. Michael Brown or Mr. Shawn Cramer directly (mobile numbers and email addresses are listed with their bios in the final pages of the resource guide) for clarification, or connect with your designated Phi Kappa Theta Spiritual Alumni Mentor.

My Spiritual Experiment:
Date:
What I Learned:
What I Felt:
How I Changed:
CONTEMPLATION
My Spiritual Experiment:
Date:
What I Learned:
What I Felt:
How I Changed:

My Spiritual Experiment:
Date:
What I Learned:
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How I Changed:

CHALLENGE

UPWARD

Realize that that you can invite the Divine Being to reveal Himself/Herself/Itself through your experimentation with spiritual activities alongside of your Phi Kappa Theta brothers.

INWARD

Reflect on what you experienced and learned about yourself through the various fraternal events and activities with which you participated. Utilize these brotherhood experiences to accelerate your own unique spiritual journey and accomplish your own spiritual development objectives.

OUTWARD

Reach out to your brothers and continue to encourage one another to pursue spiritual development both personally and fraternally. Take the lead to design and schedule interesting and inspiring events and activities that reflect the spiritual dynamic of your chapter and enhance the spiritual ethos of the brotherhood.

EDUCATE

yourself about our Catholic heritage



CONTEXT

As noted in *The Journey*, Phi Kappa Theta originated as a Catholic Fraternity. However, at the Biennial Convention of 1967, it was voted to remove the clause from the Constitution that stated members must self-identify as Catholic to join the organization. While our Fraternity has accepted into our membership many brothers who are not Catholic in their beliefs or religious practices, we continue to honor our Catholic heritage and many of the core values of Catholicism. We also remember and give tribute to the fact that Catholic men founded our organization, and so we continue to give voice to this legacy.

It is important to acknowledge that our Founding Fathers were excluded from membership into other Greek organizations because of their religious beliefs, so we will not adhere to a similar discriminating policy by excluding non-Catholics from our Phi Kappa Theta brotherhood. We are committed to doing just the opposite by embracing our Catholic heritage while simultaneously welcoming diversity among our members.



Would you self-identify as a Catholic man? If not, what would be your religious, spiritual or secular designation?				
What has been your personal experience with Catholicism?				

What do you feel are the strengths and weaknesses of the Catholic faith?							
At this point in your life, pla describe your personal feeli	•	of the adjectives that presently					
Committed	Content	Cheerful					
Conflicted	Confused	Concerned					
Cynical	Comfortable	Curious					



CURRICULUM

Since Catholicism was one of the distinguishing features of the origination of the Phi Kappa Theta Fraternity in 1959, it is important to provide an overview of the most important features of the Catholic faith within this Spiritual Development Resource Guide.

Undoubtedly, the fact that a strong spiritual emphasis continues to be reflected in the core values of our organization, even during this contemporary era, is a byproduct of the important influence of our Catholic Founding Fathers.

While this section is not intended to convince or convert non-Catholics into the Catholic faith, it is designed to provide an educational overview that will increase awareness and inspire appreciation among all members of our rich heritage.

Special thanks to Distinguished Phi Kappa Theta Brothers (Rev. Msgr. Glenn Nelson and Rev. Fr. Robert Matya) who offered their unique insights into the development of this educational module on Phi Kappa Theta's Catholic Heritage.

THREE NOTEWORTHY PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLICISM

- Catholics believe that all human beings are created in the image of God, and thus have inherent dignity. If asked why we as humans exist, Catholics might point to the Baltimore Catechism, which offers this insight: "God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in heaven."
- 2 Catholics live their lives through the transformation of grace available in the seven sacraments: Baptism, the Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, and Holy Orders.
- Catholics value personal piety *and* social justice. In particular, the corporal works of mercy are to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, bury the dead, and give alms to the poor. These works are expressed and embodied in the Phi Kappa Theta Motto to "Give, expecting nothing thereof."

THREE NOTEWORTHY PRACTICES OF CATHOLICISM

These transformational practices are essential for a committed Catholic:

1 Daily Prayer and Bible Reading

Important human relationships require daily attention and the ongoing investment of time and energy. This same principle applies in developing a relationship with God.

2 Weekly Mass

This is a weekly reminder that God is present and has paved a way to be in relationship with Him.

3 Monthly Confession

Guilt and shame are prisons for the human spirit, whereas confession of sin allows Catholics to appropriate forgiveness and experience freedom.

THREE NOTEWORTHY PASSAGES FOR CATHOLICISM

1 Matthew 22: 35-40

When asked about the greatest commandment, Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself."

This passage is at the heart of both personal piety and social justice.

2 Matthew 16: 13-19

Peter was one of the first to declare, "Jesus, you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church..."

Jesus initiates the lineage of the papacy here.

3 John 6: 51-69

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him..."

God's presence in our lives is experienced not only through this visceral reminder, but also through His very Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity contained tangibly within the Holy Eucharist.

THREE NOTEWORTHY PEOPLE IN CATHOLICISM

1 The Apostle Peter

The most outspoken, abrasive, and daring disciple, St. Peter was the first leader (Pope) of the Catholic Church in Jerusalem.

2 Blessed John Henry Newman

Your campus may have a Newman Center named after this holy man. This Catholic Convert from Anglicanism was not only a poet and theologian of the 19th century, but John Newman was an apologist who strongly defended the faith against falsehoods and attacks. His lecture entitled "Idea of a University" illustrates the importance of Theology in relation to Knowledge.

3 St. Pope John Paul II

Perhaps the most popular pope in modern history, John Paul II gave a significant facelift to Catholicism through his efforts to promote peace, involve youth in the mission of evangelization, and urge a universal call to holiness.

THREE NOTEWORTHY PRAYERS IN CATHOLICISM

1 Our Father

When Jesus' disciples asked him to teach them to pray, he responded, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

This prayer has all of the essential aspects of prayer, noted by this acrostic ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication (requests).

2 Hail Mary

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Also known as the Ave Maria, this prayer combines two passages from Gospel of Luke and request to Mary – not as a prayer to Mary, but asking her to intercede on our behalf through prayer.

3 The Nicene Creed

Catholic beliefs are succinctly expressed in this profession of faith or credo:

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father, through Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation, He came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became Man.

For our sake, He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, He suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THREE NOTEWORTHY PROBLEMS IN CATHOLICISM

1 Reality of Sex Abuse Scandals

We have all seen the media coverage of the past sins and crimes of some of the members of the Catholic Church against the most vulnerable of God's children. Knowing such terrible actions have occurred to even one innocent human being reveals the brokenness of our world and naturally causes anyone to question their faith or their association with an institution in which such atrocities were committed.

With such revelations, we are reminded of the imperfection of the human condition and the need to renew our efforts to protect the vulnerable, to seek justice, to heal the broken, to pursue holiness of life and to allow the grace of God to heal and lead all parts of His Church. The Catholic Church was not founded by man, but by Christ, and all men and women must use every effort to rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to root out all forms of evil and bring about the Kingdom of God on earth.

2 Perceptions of Institutionalism

Our modern American propensity is to distrust all institutions, as they are oftentimes perceived as authoritarian obstacles to our own personal independence and freedom. Yet Christ Himself established the Church as His bride which constructs the family through which the Children of God are nourished and nurtured.

No one is meant to live out faith alone, so the structure of the Church as an institution provides the stability of a spiritual home, which is open to all people so that resources may be shared among a community of believers who may live in harmony and peace with one another in order to also share of themselves generously with others.

3 Perceptions of Historic Exclusivity

"Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it."

The Catholic Church has been shaped by thousands of years of history that connects back to Jesus Christ Himself, but also to our Jewish heritage. Our history has been marked by both selfless goodness, and tragic evil, which in part is a result of the fallen human condition. Perceptions are oftentimes influenced by limited information.

Pursue Truth with eyes, ears and heart open to the inspiration of God, who is Truth, and all things True will be revealed. It is only then that history can be properly understood and the light of Christ, which illumines all hearts, may shine to bring healing and life to a world broken by sin and death.

CONTEMPLATION

Record any personal thoughts, reflections, concerns, or questions that surfaced when you considered: THE THREE PRINCIPLES THE THREE PRACTICES THE THREE PASSAGES THE THREE PEOPLE THE THREE PRAYERS THE THREE PROBLEMS



CONTEMPLATION

Reflection: What role, if any, will Catholic ideas play in the formation of your personal faith perspective or in developing the spiritual dimension of your life?



CONVERSATIONS

Come together as brothers (small or large group) to discuss what influence you believe that Catholic principles, practices, or philosophy should be cultivated in developing the current culture of your chapter.



CHOICES

- ✓ Visit the website www.catholic.com to learn more about our fraternity's Catholic heritage.
- ✓ Google Father Schmitz Ascension Presents to view short, energetic, and fast-paced informational videos about Catholicism.
- Download a free version of the Catechism of the Catholic Church at www.phikaps.org/catechism or www.usccb.org

CHALLENGE

UPWARD

Realize that committed Catholics believe and worship a God who created everything, a God who loves everyone, and a God who sacrificed His Son, Jesus Christ, for the sole purpose of restoring His relationship with humanity.

INWARD

Reflect on how your understanding of Catholic beliefs and your interactions with Catholic followers has shaped your personal feelings and perceptions about the Catholic faith.

OUTWARD

Reach out to sincerely devout Catholic brothers in your chapter to better understand what inspires their commitment to Catholicism and what motivates them to follow Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

APPENDIX A

Comprehensive Catalogue of Spiritual Questions

The following spiritual questions emerged during a qualitative research project at a large public university in the Midwest in 2010. College students who participated in the study articulated (in their own words) these exact questions when prompted to articulate what they consider "their own spiritual questions."

ORIGINS

Universal Causes and Earthly Beginnings

- Where did the world come from?
- Where did the universe come from?
- Why are humans alive?
- Why was I created?
- Why do people exist?
- What was the first cause that caused existence?
- ② Did the world come about by creationism or evolution?
- What gave birth to the Power that made the world?
- Where is the Power that created the world?
- Why is the world the way it is?
- **?** Why is the world so perfect?
- If the world has no beginning, will it also have no ending?
- When was the start of the Earth?
- ② Did the universe have a beginning?
- Property How was the universe created? Why was the universe created?

DIVINITY AND DEITY

God, Satan, and Extra-Terrestrial Life

- Does God exist?
- What does God want from us?
- What is true of the great prime creator of the universe?
- Open Does God have a gender?
- What does God look like?
- What is the influence of Satan in our everyday lives? To what extent does Satan operate in our lives?
- ? Is it Satan, mental disorders, sicknesses, or demons that inspire people to murder?
- If you think that God is kind and good, he must be fair, right?
- What is true of my relationship with God?
- If I diligently seek God, will he reward me?
- What is God going to do next in my life?
- Is God ticked off at me because of something I said to somebody or something I did to somebody?
- Where is God taking me? Where does he want me to be?
- Where is God taking me next?
- What separates God's desires from my desires?
- What's the line between what I want and what God wants for me?
- ? Am I doing what God wants me to do?
- ? Is God going to do what I want him to do for me?
- Ooes God laugh at me? Does he have a sense of humor?
- Why doesn't God make it more clear what would be best for us?
- Why is God so subtle? If there are things you want us to do, why aren't the signs more clear to us? Why not arrows? Why not big banners in the sky?

- ? Is God testing me?
- ? How did God make everybody look so different?
- ? How did God pick who looks like who?
- Why doesn't God talk back to me?
- ② In tough situations: is God testing me to see how far I'll go with it?
- When God puts you through some situation, was it to make you stronger for something that's about to happen?
- When temptation occurs, is that a test or is it just the devil tempting me?
- ? Is the God I pray to there or not?
- What is God like?
- What does God look like?
- Where does the word God come from?
- What made the first person think about God?
- Who was the first person to talk about God?
- Because no one has ever seen God, why do people say that God created us?
- What does God want me to strive for?
- A How does God define success?
- What is God's role in micro versus macro evolution?
- What is God's view on suicide?
- ? How great is God?
- What if who we thought was God was really the devil?
- If there is a God, why are all these bad things happening?
- If there is a God, does he make things happen or allow things to happen?
- How can God be okay with the evil that people do and just watch it happen?
- How can God let amazing people in the world get hurt?

- Why do people believe in God? Why does that belief make people comfortable?
- What do you think God's purpose is?
- Is there extra-terrestrial life?
- **?** Is there someone else out there in the universe?
- Where is God?
- Why does the God make me cry?

THE MYSTERIOUS

Reality, Realms, and Supernatural Phenomena

- What is reality?
- ? Is the whole universe in your mind?
- Why are we bound to Earth? Why can't we fly?
- Why do we feel hot and not cold when we touch fire?
- What is enjoyment? Why do we enjoy? What do we mean by enjoy?
- What is talking?
- What is existence?
- What is fun?
- What is love?
- What is work?
- What is time?
- What is good?
- What is infinity?
- When is now and then? When is right now? What is a moment?
- What is here? When is now?
- ? How do personal, spiritual, supernatural occurrences happen? Why do personal, spiritual, supernatural occurrences happen?

- ? How does this realm relate to the other realm? Do these two realms sometimes cross?
- ? Can sensitive people pick up subtle frequencies from spiritual realms?
- What does my mind create and how does that relate to reality?
- What is the relationship between the common way of thinking and different/ unconventional was or possibilities?

HUMAN EXPERIENCE

Identity, Self-Awareness, Choices, Feelings, Purpose, Calling, Direction, Community, Relationships, Pain and Suffering, Social Justice, Morality, and Virtue

- Who am I?
- What kind of person do I want to be?
- What way should I go?
- Why am I the way I am? How did I become the person I am today? Was it doom or destiny? Is it a program in my mind? Or is it my genes?
- What should I be focusing on in my life?
- What is destiny and how does that relate to my choices?
- ? How much attention should I pay to the different elements of myself?
- When I succeed in doing something, why did I succeed?
- ? How and why do I fail?
- Should I go in a way that my society and community have chosen for me or should I go my own way?
- Should I intervene when I observe someone doing something wrong?
- Generally, what is the right thing to do?
- Specifically, what is the right thing to do?
- Can doing the wrong thing be good for people?
- What is good?

- Who am I really?
- What is my true I am?
- Who am I becoming?
- Who do I want to become?
- What rings true in my own heart in my pursuit of finding truth?
- Why am I doing what I am doing?
- What do I want to do?
- How do I need to accomplish this or that? What steps do I need to take?
- Where am I going to be when I'm older? What am I going to be doing?
- Why did I make the choices I made?
- ? How is the plan all connected and how is it coming about?
- **?** What is the reason that I'm here right now?
- A How can I push myself?
- ? How can I keep growing as a person?
- Why do the things that happen to me happen?
- What am I going to do with my life? Where am I going to be? Who am I going to be with?
- What am I going to be doing in the future?
- Why am I different? Why can I feel spirits?
- Why can I feel the good feelings and bad stuff in the lives of people around me?
- Why am I here in a privileged place while others are in an impoverished place? Why am I here? And why are they there?
- With the changing of the seasons, what about my life do I want to be different in this next season?
- Am I doing the right thing?
- ? Is what I'm doing going to help me grow as a person? Is this good for me or not?

- What is going to happen after college?
- ? In regards to my spiritual gifts, why am I feeling and seeing these things when others aren't?
- What do I want?
- ? How can anything that we do matter?
- Why am I interacting with these people?
- Why am I surrounded by these people? What's the purpose of that?
- Why did I let this person into my life? How is that affecting me? What lesson did I learn? What did I gain from this relationship?
- Why do people do the things that they do?
- Why haven't I met my father? Why doesn't he want to be in my life?
- When the two that the time of a different faith could be good?
- How can someone do something bad or treat someone a certain way?
- What are all the people around me doing and what do they want? What do they believe? What are they going through? Why are they going through that?
- **?** Why do some people choose to live in more simple and primitive places as opposed to other places?
- What are the life plans of people around me?
- What do I think about getting married someday?
- Who do I want to surround myself with?
- Why am I feeling a certain way?
- Are the emotions I am feeling my own or am I just picking up on other people's emotions?
- What is my purpose here?
- What is the purpose of this confusion?
- Oo I really need to be worrying about what's going on right now?

- How is it that everyone knows what they want to do, but yet I don't know what I am going to do?
- What are the thoughts that I'm having? Which ones are most important? Which ones are relevant? Which ones are not? Why am I having these thoughts?
- ? Am I making the right decisions in life? Am I making the right choices?
- Where do I draw the line between thinking and over-thinking?
- ? Am I about to make the right decision?
- What am I called to do?
- What is going to happen in my life?
- What's going to happen in other people's lives?
- ? Is my girlfriend the right person for me?
- ? Was it the right decision to jump back into a relationship after I got out of one?
- How is the world going to have an impact on my life in general?
- Am I going to get to live the life that I want to live?
- **?** Am I going to be able to make enough money? Am I going to be able to be sustained? Am I going to be able to do everything that I need to do?
- What is the meaning of life?
- What is the good life?
- What do I want to achieve?
- How do I maintain balance?
- A How do I live with integrity?
- How should I treat others?
- How did those who die live their lives? As a result, how should I live my life?
- What should I be doing?
- What should I do differently next time?
- Have I gone through tough times that made me stronger?

- Where do I want to be? Who do I want to be around? Who are the people I want to surround myself with? What is the environment I want to be in? Who are my friends?
- A How do I feel? Why do I feel that way? What's making me feel this way?
- ? How does doing this or that make me feel?
- What do I need to do to feel good?
- ? How do people hate? How do people hate without understanding?
- ? How can people claim to be Christian if they're going to hate other people? How should I react to the hate I see?
- Why do people kill other people? What were they thinking? How are they going to suffer in a spiritual sense for their choices? Does doing religious things make up for their moral decisions?
- When considering murders, homicides, and suicides: how can someone do this? What possesses someone to do this?
- ? Why? What has been the reason for all of it?
- Why do terrible things happen in our lives?
- What's the reason behind the bad things that happen to people?
- With all these terrible things happening, is it the hand of God coming down and never doing something, or is it human action deviating from what he would want for us?
- Why did this happen? What was the point for this? Was it to push me somewhere? What was the reason?
- Why am I me? Why am I like this? Why do I look the way I do?
- Why do I feel certain ways?
- What big impact, if any, am I going to make on the world?
- Where am I going to be in the future? What's next?
- Everybody has a purpose in life: how do I figure out what is the one purpose for me?
- Why do people look the way they look?

- What if I didn't come to this college? Why did I make that decision? What if I would have done something different instead?
- ? Why have I been through the things I have been through?
- ? If I have to wait, why do I have to wait?
- When something doesn't work out, is it because it wasn't supposed to happen? Or was it because you didn't pray enough? Or you weren't ready for it yet?
- ? So why did that bad stuff have to happen?
- Why do bad things happen to good people?
- Am I doing everything right?
- ? How do I know when something is the wrong choice, and then how do I get back on the right track?
- Can you have sexual intercourse with the one person you want to be with for the rest of your life? Or do you have to be married? Or does it really matter?
- Why do you meet the people you meet?
- Can I date someone out of my race or not?
- If life is here to enjoy, then why is there pain?
- Why does there need to be a scarcity of things in the world?
- How do I reach that place where I reach the answers to my questions?
- If the world is to enjoy, why are there responsibilities that have to be done?
- How do other people think about these questions that I think about?
- Why do certain things happen?
- Ooes my purpose coincide with my plan?
- Are my dreams and goals going to coincide with God's plan for me?
- ? Are the big plans and goals and the things I frame my life around and everything I have built in my head about my future is this what is really going to happen?
- Am I accepted unconditionally? Am I loved unconditionally?
- Am I viewed as beautiful by God?

- If I am loved by God, why would I allow anyone to treat me poorly or why would I allow myself to feel poorly about myself?
- If God loves me regardless of however messed up I look or however messed up I act, why should I feel bad about myself?
- In light of all the devastation we have brought upon this Earth, why were humans created?
- Why are we here?
- What is humanity's purpose at this point in history?
- **?** At this point in time, what is our true purpose? What are we supposed to be doing with our time?
- If I'm supposed to be here for a purpose, how do I know if I've done it yet?
- Can something that seems supposedly good actually be bad for me?
- Why do we have emotional hurt and pain in the world? What is the point of us hurting each other? What are people's motives in hurting other people?
- ? Are hurt and pain present so that we can learn from them?
- Why do atrocities like genocides happen?
- What happens when your brain says you're a girl but your genitalia say you're a boy?
- Is homosexuality an abomination or a man-made creation?
- Would I support a gay friend by standing with them at their wedding ceremony?
- What kind of person am I going to be?
- What kind of person do I want to be?
- Why am I myself? Why do I have the thoughts I do?
- Why is it you living in the world? Why me living?
- Why are we living in this world? Why are we living?
- Why was I born where I was born?
- What are people's values?

- What are my values?
- How should I communicate with others?
- Why is the world so unfair to me?
- Why do bad things happen to me?
- Why can't I do the things I want to do?
- Why am I always caught when I try to do something wrong?
- What will I do if I'm in a really big disaster?
- Am I doing what God wants me to? Could I be doing better?
- Oo I make my parents proud?
- ② Do I want what other people want for me? Or do I want what God wants? Or is it the same thing?
- What is the future going to look like?
- What is the parallel between what the world calls success and what God calls success?
- Am I failure in the world's standards?
- ② Do I measure up to other Christians? What's wrong with me? Why am I not getting it?
- Where should I go to church?
- When will I have children?
- ② Do I need to give that over to God?
- Why was God putting our church through this? Why was this happening? Why wasn't he meeting us there? Why does it feel like we're being punished?
- Since God doesn't make mistakes, what does that mean about my sister with severe disabilities? What do I learn from her? If she's not a mistake, then what purpose does she have here?
- ? What does community look like? How do I find it? What do I do to maintain it?
- What would my definition of morality be?

- **?** What right do humans have over life? What about euthanasia? Do I have the right to end my own life?
- ② Do I take part in technology that has come from stem cell research? Where do we draw the line? How many degrees of separation do we have to get before it's okay to take part in technology that's been advanced from things that are morally questionable?
- As I think about having children, what do I believe about fertility drugs?
- Is war justified? What's the line between defending yourself and pacifism?
- What kind of sex education do we give our children?
- Who am I?
- Why are we here?
- What does that dash on my tombstone represent? What do I want to be known for? What legacy do I want to leave?
- What am I doing?
- What is my main desire in life?
- Where should I work?
- Is who you are what you do? Is who you are what you think when you're not doing anything?
- What sort of funny thing should I do with my life right now?
- ? How should I expose something that needs to change?
- ? How can I engage people?
- We have time, so what should we do with it?
- ? How can I love people and help people?
- Why aren't people helping?
- ? Are you serious? Why, human race? Why can't we figure this out? Is this a distribution problem? Is this an apathy problem? Is this a faith problem? Is this a stupidity problem? Is this a lack of understanding of what development really is? How can we fix the problems of the world?

- How can we make things better in the world? What are helpful systems we can create?
- When the two the two that the two th
- ? How can I make people think the way that I want them to think? How can I influence them to live a more positive and influential life?
- Am I liked? Am I loved? Am I cared about?
- Will anyone listen?
- Oo I belong?
- Who should I go talk to?
- Is this really family? Is this what family is all about? Is this what I'm supposed to be thankful for?
- Who am I going to hang out with? Who are going to be my dudes? Who are going to be my friends?
- When I go out into the world, am I going to be asking these questions with similar or different people? Will I be going out to faith communities and non-faith communities and scientific communities and academic communities and asking these similar questions? Am I comfortable enough with these questions that I'm going to ask them to every single person that I come by?
- ② Does everyone want people to think the way that they do?
- Why do so many people come to the bars and what are they looking for?
- A How do I do it?
- ? How do I do goodness?
- A How do I do faithfulness?
- A How do I do love?
- If I do have sex before marriage, will I learn more about life than if I had sex after marriage?
- ? Can I just have sex before marriage and have some sort of redemption, so that I think that I learn and trick myself?

- Am I allowed to get drunk?
- ? How can people be the way they are?
- Why are all the genocides still happening and continuing to happen?
- Why are unnecessary wars still happening? Why are there all the wars still happening?
- Why are people put on this Earth with the disabilities that they have? Why did God do that?
- Why do some kids with special needs have families that don't accept them?
- Why do people get divorced?
- What are people thinking?
- ? Why do people do the things they do?
- Why can't people coexist?
- Why do people do the things they do to not coexist?
- Why am I here?
- Output
 How do I advance myself to the point where I'm not here anymore? What can I do to advance my enlightenment?
- What am I doing here? Why am I in a body alive right now?
- What do I need to be working on?
- What do I need to be doing?
- How do I cleanse my body and soul to receive true information?
- Output
 How do I live in a way that allows me to experience the connection between my mind, my body, and my spirit?
- How do I get that connection at a level where I can flourish and grow faster spiritually?
- ? How do my intentions and my actions help or hurt healing?
- ? How do I mix my spiritual and social life? And then how do I balance those two things?

- **?** Why aren't things perfect on Earth? Why are we separated from perfection on Earth?
- ? How can we get this world to a place where things are perfect?
- **?** What is the final solution to achieving perfection?
- ? How does society function and nature function, and why is there such a huge discrepancy between these two things?
- ? Why is our society set up in a way that is obviously not healthy for us?
- ? Why do people put up with a lot of stuff that society just feeds us?
- What role does the government play in the spiritual development of the population?
- ? How do we empower people to start taking control of their spiritual development, war against their temptations, and discover the path to end suffering?
- What kinds of things are people involved with that leads to suffering?
- ? How am I developing and growing as a person?
- What have I done in the past? And where am I going?
- Where am I headed? What am I doing?
- Is this right? Is this wrong?
- During each day, where was I strong and what did I achieve?
- What am I getting from all my travels? Have I taken the time to do more than seeing, but am I actually looking around?
- Are people doing what they are supposed to be doing in their lives?
- ? How do we eliminate the preconceived notions that people have in their heads about others?
- Output
 How do I stay the way I am without forming any opinion about a person until I know the person better?
- Why do people act and say the things they do? How did I react to them? If I had reacted differently, would their behavior change?

- How are people thinking like this and why are they thinking like this? What is their mental processing? Why do they say stuff like this? And who told them these things? And why do they just agree with something without questioning it?
- Why did I not show my true self to this person? Why did I not say exactly what I was thinking?
- Why did I get mad? How could I have told this thing differently and still be able to convey that I did not like what they said or did not agree?
- Output
 How do we make the world a fairer place? What can be done differently? What needs to be done differently?
- ? How are people who live in difficult places able to live and survive?
- What are we, as individuals, doing to the environment? Environmentally, can we do more to improve things?
- How do I improve myself every day?
- ? How do I become better?
- ? How do I find this path in my life?
- ? How do I make a contribution to this life in such a way that people remember me?
- What are my values in this world?
- What are my preferences in this world?
- Is this something I want to do?
- What will make me happier: friends or material wealth?
- ② Do I want to be a person who follows my brain and accomplished everything, or a person who follows the crowd?
- What lessons did my parents want to give me?
- What did my parents want me to achieve and accomplish?
- How do I help other people?
- Why am I alone? Where are my friends?
- Openie love me?

- Why was I feeling alone when people surrounded me and were asking me, "How are you doing?"
- Why is this happening to me? Why should I cry on this issue? Can I stop doing that? Is crying a part of the lesson? Is it something God wants to address in me?
- What is going to happen to my children, grandchildren, and entire country because of environmental problems?
- What should I do when people are not around me? How can I struggle with it?
- What is going to happen to my children, grandchildren, and entire country because of environmental problems?
- ? What is going to happen to the people in poorer countries when they suffer?
- Is this moral?
- ? How do I stay moral? How do I keep my morals and values from my country?
- How do I live correctly?
- Is this person moral?
- How do I let people understand that they are doing wrong?

TRUTH AND BELIEF

Religion, Spirituality, and Sacred Texts

- ? What should I believe in? And what if I choose a belief that is wrong?
- ? Is this right? Is this truth? And how do you know?
- How do I fit my beliefs with what my parents believe?
- ② Do we really need other people to follow our religion?
- Is religion dangerous?
- Why should world religions spread out?
- Why is there a rivalry among religions?
- ② Do we really need institutions like churches, mosques, and synagogues to follow our faith?

- Is abortion right?
- What do people from other religions believe?
- What do I believe about the Catholic Church?
- What would Jesus do?
- Will God send good people, who never had the chance to hear the Good News, to hell?
- ② Do you have to be a Christian to go to heaven?
- O Do you have to attend Mass every Sunday to go to heaven?
- Should I obey the church, even if they are making mistakes?
- ? Is the Catholic Church the right church for me?
- ? How do you trust what you see and hear?
- Why is there such a strong connection between different kinds of people who experience the same powerful spiritual experience?
- What would it be like if there was no religion?
- ? How has religion shaped the government?
- A How has religion shaped the world?
- ? Are the different religions essentially the same?
- **?** If there was no religion, would we be more open with each other and accepting? However, if we didn't have the structure of religion, would it just be chaos?
- If what happened in history between the Church and State never happened, where would we be now and how would we be affected?
- Ooes Jesus need to be our Savior?
- Why has the feminine aspect of religion been shut down and ignored, particularly in Christianity? What has happened to humanity that caused the feminine aspect of religion to be put on the back burner? Why can't the two different sides of God be reflected?

- Why can I see ghosts and spirits when others do not? And why are they choosing to be here right now? What do they want us to know? And what do they want me to do? Why would a spirit choose to come back to Earth and be shown? What are they doing and why are they here? What are they trying to accomplish?
- What are methods of healing?
- When I am sinning, I ask myself two questions: Am I going to hell for this? Could Jesus' return come right now?
- ? Is the stuff that I heard in that sermon really true?
- What if what I believe isn't real?
- Is believing in Christ just a coping mechanism?
- Where does true faith come from?
- What does the Bible say about faith?
- ? How can you have faith in something that you don't have a relationship with? And how can you have a relationship with someone that you don't have faith in?
- ? How is it that my relationship with God is different than your relationship with God, but yet we have the same spirit that is being fed into both of us?
- Is there anything that any of the apostles or any of the people who wrote in the Bible... anything that these godly men could have missed?
- Ooes the fact that man is not perfect when he was writing the Bible mean that he could have written some things down wrong? Or that he might not have added some things that he should have?
- What is heaven going to be like? Is it going to be one big hotel party?
- What is it going to be like to see Christ in heaven? What's it going to be like when I finally meet him? What am I going to say?
- What's it going to be like to just live in eternal salvation?
- What's it going to be like to go through the rapture?
- What is my commitment to the religion?
- Should I be more religious?

- Should I follow my Jewish practices more?
- Should I be more committed to my faith and religion?
- Should I be more [religiously] conservative or should I stay where I am?
- Should I mirror what other [Jewish] people are doing?
- What is my commitment to the state of Israel?
- ② Should Jews move to Israel? Should all Jews live in Israel?
- Should I raise my kids Jewish?
- ? Is homosexuality against the Bible?
- How can people be extreme in any religion?
- Provided How can someone be so far one way and lose everything else, just because they think their religion is telling them to?
- ? How accurate is the Bible? How valid is it? Depending on who wrote it, wouldn't it be different?
- Was the Bible written by a man?
- If the Bible would have been written by a woman, would God have been portrayed as a female?
- If you're fully devout, should you do everything the Bible says, or can you pick and choose from the Bible?
- ② Does it have to be a woman who ruins everything in the Garden of Eden? Why wouldn't the first man make that mistake? Why was she made from him? Why wasn't she made as her own being?
- ? If there are so many other beliefs, is one better than the other?
- ? Am I supposed to be going through all these religions and examining them, and then make my choice?
- Am I supposed to look through every single religion, look at what makes them unique or different than other religions, and then pick one? Is there a wrong answer?
- If you've never learned about the other world religions, how can you claim something when you don't know anything else?

- Why do I have to tell my priest my confessions? Why can't I just tell God? If the relationship is between me and God, why does a priest have to get involved?
- ? Why didn't God save Jesus when he was on the cross?
- Am I just praying to nobody?
- When prayers aren't answered: Was I the only one praying for them or did I not pray enough or long enough?
- ? Can you sin too much? How do you know if you're forgiven for those sins?
- When is Christ coming back?
- Why does religion try to save itself? Why do religions try to maintain their existence?
- What is the difference between Christianity and Islam?
- If God made both male and female in his image, why did he make Eve out of Adam?
- Why did God make Adam a sexual counterpart instead of just a friend?
- Why didn't some books of the Bible make it into the Bible as we have it today?
- Why is there a Pope? And what does he really do? If there is no longer a need for priests to sacrifice for us, why is there a Pope to be a religious medium between God and the people? Why do we still need him when it says in the Word that we can go to God?
- Why do I pray?
- When I am praying and in worship, who or what am I feeling? Is it God or the Holy Spirit? Am I feeling something positive from God or negative from the devil, and can I even tell the difference?
- When I pray for something, is it because it is good and right and what I should have, or it is because of something I want?
- Why am I not one of the people with beliefs?
- What should we believe in?
- Why do some people believe in God and others don't?

- Why do different countries have different religions?
- What makes people believe in religion?
- What can belief in religion bring people?
- Which religion is best?
- Should I believe in religion?
- When the second influence do demons have over Christians? Can Christians be plagued by demons?
- What if I encounter people who are being plagued by a demon?
- What can I do if I feel like I'm being attacked with lies or physical ailments?
- What do the various doctrinal practices that I've been commanded to do really mean?
- ? Is the story of creation literal or poetic?
- Oid Adam have a belly button? Did Adam walk around with dinosaurs?
- Did Noah have dinosaurs on the ark?
- Open Does God command tithing?
- ? The Bible says, "Do not put any graven image on your body," so should I get a tattoo? That was the Old Testament, so does that still apply to me?
- What does the Bible mean by not getting drunk? What does drunk mean? Is tipsy being bad? Is being light-headed being bad?
- What is the line between predestination and free will?
- What do I believe about baptism? What does baptism really mean for the modernday Christian?
- Is it once a Christian, always a Christian? Can we turn our back on God and somehow lose our salvation?
- How does God view Islam? How does the rest of the world view this religion?
- ? Is the Islam Allah my God?

- ? Is Islam a violent religion or not? Is it only the strict Muslim people who are violent? How much have they really missed the mark?
- What is the Islamic view of Jesus?
- With other religions, what does it mean to have to worry about your eternity?
- What does God feel about war? What's the difference between what the Israelites did, which God said, "I'm for you. I'm commanding you: go to war," and what we're doing in the Middle East?
- What does God feel about being homosexual and being a Christian?
- Why would I even associate with something that's not of God? Why would I even contemplate that, if it's so far from God?
- What do I hold to be true?
- Where do I stand in my doctrine?
- ? As an Agnostic, what do I do and where do I go to practice?
- ? How do church people know that this is how you get to heaven?
- (2) Is communion Jesus' body and blood?
- Am I supposed to go to mass on Sundays or every day?
- ? How should I pray? Where should I pray?
- What do different religions believe and practice?
- Why are there so many different religions and why do people believe in different things?
- Who wrote the Torah? Who wrote the Bible?
- Why do people pick and choose what they want to [follow] in the Bible and Torah?
- Why do Christians follow Jesus differently than Jewish people?
- Why are there so many differences between Christianity and Judaism? Why do they follow the New Testament and we follow the Old Testament? Why do we have services on Friday and they have services on Sunday?
- Why do Christians live their lives to die, just to make sure they die in the right place, when they could live their lives to be the best they could be?

- ? How do we separate religion from the entire world scenario? How do we separate religion from interactions and decisions in daily life? Is it even possible?
- Who defines what practices make you a better religious person and what would those practices be?
- If I pray five times each day and fast, is that enough for God to feel that I am a good Muslim or is there something beyond that?
- Why are Muslims from different parts of the world so different from each other?
- Where does religion address environmental issues, particularly about what human beings are doing to the environment? Why doesn't religion say more?
- Should I really move towards that position of being a more religious person?
- Orthodox Church by heart?
 Orthodox when I do not know the ten positions of the
- ? Can I call myself Orthodox? If I can, why haven't I read the Bible?
- Should I use the word "must" when reading the Bible, or should I use the word "should" when I read the Bible?
- ? Am I with the devil because I do not act sometimes according to the Bible?
- Why not read the Bible? Why not ask those questions and try to get answers to them?
- Why is my religion the religion of suffering and patience?
- How does the person who does not speak, can't hear, and can't see everything be religious? How could this person be with the church?

DESTINY AND DESTINATIONS

Death, Post-Death Journey, Afterlife

- What's going to happen in the afterlife?
- What is the picture of the afterlife? What does it look like: reincarnation or something like that? Or heaven? Or decomposition? Or becoming a ghost?
- What can prevent death from happening to us?

- When death happens: Why them? Why now? Why does death happen when it does? Why does it have to happen?
- Should we ever be happy when someone dies?
- Is there an afterlife?
- ? What is this afterlife? How are we going to get there? Who goes there?
- ? If I can't comprehend an afterlife, how can I know it's there?
- ? How could I live for eternity after I die? How can I know really?
- **?** Is there a heaven? What is heaven?
- ? How do I perceive heaven? How can we truly know what heaven is like? Are there pearly gates? Are there streets and cities and mansions of gold? Are there mansions? What does heaven look like? What is heaven really?
- Is heaven a bunch of personal paradises linked together?
- A How does hell work? What are the criteria for hell?
- What happens the second you die? Are we immediately in heaven at that point?
- What does judgment look like after death?
- On the end of the e
- What does the series of events look like on Judgment Day? Will a giant projector screen come down?
- What's the deal with the rapture? How will this really happen? Why are certain people taken and others are not?
- ? Am I doing everything right, so that when I get to the gates, I'm going to get in?
- What is heaven like?
- Where is heaven?
- What happens when you are in heaven for eternity? What do you do in heaven? Is it like life [here] or do you just play games?

- ② Did my friend die because he did something wrong? Did my friend die because he already found his purpose in life? Once you find your purpose in life, do you die and are gone?
- In the afterlife, is it a dark tunnel you go through or a light tunnel?
- What's death going to be like? What's it going to feel like? When is it going to happen?
- A How far away is heaven?
- Will I be wandering once I die until I get to heaven? Does it take a long time or are you just there?
- Is the journey through the death tunnel happy or sad?
- What does heaven look like? Is it houses? Is it clouds?
- If we're in heaven for eternity-ish, like what are we going to do for that long? Are you going to get bored? Will heaven get overcrowded?
- **?** If there are so many people in heaven, how do you find somebody there? And if it's just your soul in heaven, do you look the same?
- Will my friend make it into heaven?
- What comes after death?
- Ooes your purpose dictate when you die? If you fulfill your purpose, what is your point of being here anymore?
- What would I do if I lose a family member?
- What if I lost my grandpa or grandma when I'm not around them?
- When people die, what will happen to them?
- Why did the death of my family member have to happen?
- Why did I have to be away when my uncle died? Why couldn't I have said goodbye to him?
- What happens when we die?
- Why did my parents die? Why did this happen to me? And why did it happen when I was 15?

APPENDIX B

Excerpts from... Into the Breach: An Apostolic Exhortation to Catholic Men

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CATHOLIC MAN?

Every man, particularly today, must come to a mature acceptance and understanding of what it means to be a man. This may seem obvious, but in our world, there are many distorted images and much evidence of confusion regarding what is true masculinity. We can say that for the first time in history, people have become either so confused or so arrogant as to attempt to dictate their masculinity or femininity according to their own definitions.

At one striking moment of Jesus' trial, Pontius Pilate, with all his worldly power, presented Jesus to the crowd with the words, Ecce homo – Latin meaning "Here is the man!" Thinking he was merely pointing to a man from Nazareth, he failed to recognize that he was pointing to God made man – the Word made flesh, Jesus of Nazareth – who at once is fully God and fully man, and the perfection of masculinity. Every moment of his life on earth is a revelation of the mystery of what it means to be man – that is, to be fully human and also, the model of masculinity.

Nowhere else can we find the fullness of masculinity as we do in the Son of God. Only in Jesus Christ can we find the highest display of masculine virtue and strength that we need in our personal lives and in society itself. What was visible in Christ's earthly life leads to the invisible mystery of his divine Sonship and redemptive mission. The Father sent his Son to reveal what it means to be a man, and the fullness of this revelation becomes evident on the Cross. He tells us that it was for this reason that He came into the world, that it is his earnest desire to give himself totally to us. Herein lies the fullness of masculinity...

Looking to what the secular world holds up as "manly" is in fact to look at shadows – or even at outright counterfeits – of masculinity. No athlete, no matter how many awards; no political leader, no matter the power he wields; no performer, business man, or celebrity, no matter how much adored; no physical attribute or muscle mass; no intelligence or talent; no prizes or achievements can bestow masculinity on a man. The idolatry of celebrities at this time is a particular temptation, but to build one's masculine identity on such fleeting models is to build an identity on sand.

My Catholic sons and brothers, we can only build a certain foundation for masculinity on the rock, Jesus Christ. We look to our Savior to be transformed in Him, to be the men we are called to be, and to let others see Him in us. Yet we do not merely look to Jesus. We truly encounter Christ at Mass when we receive the very gift of Himself in the Eucharist. For this reason, I call upon my brother priests to awaken the sense of transcendence in the hearts of men through reverent and beautiful liturgy, helping men to rediscover Jesus in the Eucharist each and every Sunday. I ask my brother priests to teach the faithful about the powerful truth of the liturgy, especially in ways to which men can relate. Teaching men to understand the fullness and power of the Mass must be a top priority. What a joy it is for men of God when they are led by priests who have a confident sense of their own masculinity, their call to participate in Christ's spousal love, and their generous, life-giving fatherhood!

THE CATHOLIC MAN'S IDENTITY

I wish now to speak to you about our identity in Christ. Most of the holy men I mentioned above lived in times quite different than our own. They had different challenges and different callings, but all had one thing in common: Jesus Christ, who gave them their true identity! Here we recall the wisdom of the Second Vatican Council: "Jesus Christ reveals man to himself and makes his supreme calling clear."

In subtle ways, we are tempted to look elsewhere for our identity. The opinions of others, the success of our careers, the number of possessions, toys, sports, hobbies, clothing, tattoos, homes, and cars – these are all ways that tempt us to label or identify ourselves in ways outside of Christ. While some of these must be a part of life to an extent, they are not the core of our being. Having been purchased by the blood of the Lamb, "our citizenship is in Heaven" (Phil. 3:20). The world cannot possibly give us our true identity; "Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:8). We must be aware of being distracted by false identities and remain grounded in Jesus Christ.

Simply put, our identity is caught up in the identity of the eternal Son of God. It is received at our baptism as it was clearly exclaimed at the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River: "You are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11). When we speak of conversion, we are speaking about an acceptance of and growth into this identity. When we speak about sin, we are speaking of all that takes us away from our identity as beloved sons of the Father. Since this is our identity – being beloved sons of God the Father – is it surprising that the devil is waging a fierce battle on masculinity and fatherhood in our day? The process of Christian conversion includes coming to know God's love and experiencing brotherhood with Christ who deepens our identity as sons of the Father in the Holy Spirit. This is our lifelong goal and our spiritual battle.

THE PRACTICES OF A COMMITTED CATHOLIC MAN

Given these reflections on Catholic manhood, we move to the practical, that is, how to live like a Catholic man. What practices can help us to take up our cross and follow our King? If we think of soldiers who do not remain in strong physical and mental shape and who fail to practice the essential combat arts, we know they will not be ready for battle and will be a danger to themselves and their comrades in arms. The same is true for Catholic men; those who do not prepare and strengthen themselves for spiritual combat are incapable of filling the breach for Christ.

While there are many habits and devotions that a Catholic man can form, I charge you with keeping these seven basic practices on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. If these practices are not (yet) part of your life, start now!

DAILY

1 Pray every day.

Each Catholic man must start his day with prayer. It is said, "Until you realize that prayer is the most important thing in life, you will never have time for prayer." Without prayer, a man is like a soldier who lacks food, water, and ammunition. Set aside some time to speak with God first thing each morning. Pray the three prayers essential to the Catholic faith: the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Glory Be. Pray also at every meal. Before food or drink touches your lips, make the Sign of the Cross, say the "Bless us, O Lord" prayer, and end with the Sign of the Cross. Do this no matter where you are, with whom or how much you are eating. Never be shy or ashamed about praying over meals. Never deny Christ the gratitude that is due to Him. Praying as a Catholic man before every meal is a simple but powerful way to keep strong and fill the breach.

2 Examine your conscience before going to sleep.

Take a few moments to review the day, including both your blessings and sins. Give God thanks for blessings and ask forgiveness for sins. Say an Act of Contrition.

3 Go to Mass.

Despite the fact that attending weekly Mass is a Precept of the Church, only about one in three Catholic men attend Sunday Mass. For large numbers of Catholic men, their neglect to attend Mass is a grave sin, a sin that puts them in mortal danger. The Mass is a refuge in the Spiritual Battle, where Catholic men meet their King, hear His commands, and become strengthened with the Bread of Life. Every Mass is a miracle where Jesus Christ is fully present, a miracle that is the high point not only of the week, but of our entire lives on Earth. In the Mass, a man gives thanks to God for his many blessings and hears Christ send him again into the world to build the Kingdom of God. Fathers who lead their children to Mass are helping in a very real way to ensure their eternal salvation.

4 Read the Bible.

As St. Jerome so clearly tells us, "Ignorance of the Sacred Scriptures is ignorance of Christ." When we read God's word, Jesus is present. My brothers in Christ, this I can assure you: men who read the Bible grow in grace, wisdom, and peace.

5 Keep the Sabbath.

From the creation of Adam and Eve, God the Father established a weekly cycle ending with the Sabbath. He gave us the Sabbath to ensure that one day out of seven we will give thanks to God, rest, and be refreshed. In the Ten Commandments, God asserts anew the importance of keeping the Sabbath. With today's constant barrage of buying and selling and the cacophony of noisy media, the Sabbath is God's respite from the storm. As Catholic men, you must begin, or deepen, keeping the holiness of the Sabbath. Dedicate the day to rest and true recreation, and avoid work that is not necessary. Spend time with family, attend Mass, and enjoy the gift of the day.

MONTHLY

6 Go to Confession.

At the very start of Christ's public ministry, Jesus calls on all men to repent. Without repentance from sin, there can be no healing or forgiveness, and there will be no Heaven. Large numbers of Catholic men are in grave mortal danger, particularly given the epidemic levels of pornography consumption. My brothers, get to Confession now! Our Lord Jesus Christ is a merciful King who will forgive those who humbly confess their sins. He will not forgive those who refuse. Open your soul to the gift of our Lord's mercy!

7 Build fraternity with other Catholic men.

Catholic friendship among men has a dramatic impact on their faith lives. Men who have bonds of brotherhood with other Catholic men pray more, go to Mass and Confession more frequently, read the Scriptures more often, and are more active in the Faith. Proverbs tells us: "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another" (27:17). I call on each of our priests and deacons to draw men together in their parishes and to begin to rebuild a vibrant and transforming Catholic fraternity. I call on lay men to form small fellowship groups for mutual support and growth in the faith. There is no friendship like having a friend in Christ.

HOW DOES A CATHOLIC MAN LOVE?

Now let us consider masculine love. This is not easy to do because the word love has almost lost its meaning in today's society. It is a word that men have even become uncomfortable using. Why is this? What does the word now imply? A mere feeling? Something passing? A four-letter word useful for marketing and greeting cards but for little else?

Christ makes clear that central to His mission is love. "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12) He says with passion, but without a hint of sentimentality. All of our Lord's teachings boil down to this command. Love is not a side-job; it is the mission itself. Yet, we can only love as we are created, and therefore, we can only love as men. So, how do men love?

For decades now, a model for manhood has been fashioned in the fictional British spy character named James Bond. Various actors have taken turns portraying this man who, in several adventures, has proposed what it means to be "manly," yet Bond remains an enigma. Like the women that he uses in the films, the ones who watch him find themselves wanting to know him. He is never a father, nor does he accept responsibility for or love one woman. In him, we see a man whose relationships are shallow and purely utilitarian. Indeed, "James Bond is a male character whose name is the height of irony. He is 40 years old and has no bonds. He is actually pathetic." How different this is from Jesus Christ! Is there fear in Him? Not in the least! Who is more of a man, the one who runs away or the one who can face the responsibilities and challenges of relationships, family, and intimacy? Could a man fearful of self-gift be a true disciple of Christ? In fact, can such a man love at all?

James Bond's name is the height of irony because he is a man with no bonds. Yet true masculine love will always build bonds! On the Cross and through the Eucharist, Jesus gives his very blood to bind us to Himself in love. At the Last Supper, offering us the Eucharist, His prayer to the Father is "that they may be one even as we are one" (John 17:11). As He proclaims, His committed, binding love will "draw all men to himself" (John 12:32). In its Latin root, the word religion implies "binding together."

In this context, I must mention what is called machismo and call Catholic men to rise above this tendency. The display of machismo attempts to seek safety in an image of toughness and emotionless living. However, it is merely a thin outer mask covering a deep inner fear of true bonds with others, bonds that come with true relationship and make one's life rich and meaningful. Behind the mask, as any mature person can see, is a man stuck in adolescent fear of vulnerability. In most cases, he has himself been badly hurt and is repeating a cycle learned in childhood.

Instead, the true love of Christ is centered on willing the good of the other, on pouring oneself out in charity for others. This is how the Son reveals the Father's love: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you...This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15: 9, 12). In Christ, we see that sacrifice is at the heart of love. Only the man who has fought the interior battle of self-mastery against sterility, the man who lays down his life for others, can avoid stagnancy and self-absorption. Never doubt that this sacrifice is worth the suffering! Our Lord encourages men in saying, "greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

A FRIEND IN CHRIST - BANDS OF BROTHERS

At the very inception of his ministry here on earth, Jesus called other men to join Him. What was He teaching us here? We see that Jesus called His disciples to Himself in such a way that they would form deep bonds of friendship and brotherhood. At the last supper, He specifically said to them, "No longer do I call you servants. For the servant does not know what the Master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15). This friendship with God is possible, a true brotherhood with Jesus, because we have the same Father. Do you, my sons, have true brothers in Christ in your life?

Throughout all of history, including the history of Christianity, important movements were spurred on by bands of brothers, friends in Christ. The Early Church Fathers St. Gregory Nazianzen and St. Basil were great friends and co-workers in the defense of Christ as they stood for the truth and defeated early heresies threatening the Church. St. Benedict and his monastic companions established communities of men that preserved and furthered Western culture in the face of barbarian destruction. This veritable fortress protecting truth, goodness, and beauty was built upon the stable and rich life of Christian brotherhood and friendship.

St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic each started bands of brothers in service to the poor and in defense of the truth. The early founders of the Society of Jesus, St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Francis Xavier, influenced countless other men, brought about great renewal in the Church, and evangelized to the furthest reaches of the world. In the 20th century, we see the friendship between C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien and their brother "Inklings" as indispensable in the growth and flourishing of their own literary and apologetic gifts.

What is friendship? Who is a friend? The Scriptures tell us, "A friend is a friend at all times, and a brother is born for the time of adversity" (Proverbs 17:17). I am convinced that if men will seek true brotherhood, the adversities we face today will solidify bands of brothers who will be lauded in Heaven!

Therefore, men, ask yourself: what are your friends like? Do you have friends with whom you share the mission of holiness? Often young men will go to the seminary and discover the difference made by Christ-centered friendships, and their lives are transformed. This friendship is not limited to religious orders and priests. The renewal of masculinity cannot happen without banding together as brothers and true friends. In my own life, ever since my first year as a priest, I have been richly blessed by brother priests in the Jesus Caritas Fraternity. Their commitment to Eucharistic adoration and simplicity of life, their fidelity to Christ in celibacy and daily prayer, their fraternal love, wise counsel, and encouragement have richly influenced and inspired me to persevere in my own mission in Christ. It has been a joy to see how fraternity in my diocese has grown and flourished through participation in our Men's Conferences, Knights of Columbus, That Man is You, Cursillo Movement, and other such groups and events. There is room to grow, of course, but already the fruits of the Spirit are evident among these Catholic brothers and friends.

Conversely, we have seen what happens when men, young and old, do not form or sustain healthy friendships. Many, looking in the wrong places, find themselves in the false brotherhood of gangs, or without brotherhood at all, isolated and alone, and lacking these critical formative experiences of accountability and the trusted fellowship that only true friendship provides.

Studies have shown that many men today are living friendless lives. This has its effect on marriages where men have no emotional support apart from their wives, as well as on children, who should see true friends in the lives of their parents but often do not. What a blessing to have the presence of good faithful friends to provide the encouragement and accountability we need to be free! Indeed, as the Scriptures tell us, "as iron sharpens iron, so one man must sharpen another" (Proverbs 27:17).

HOPE IN THE SHADOWS OF LOST FATHERHOOD

I would now like to say a special word to those of you, my sons, who have suffered the absence of your own father. There are many reasons why men abandon their responsibilities, or even if they remain, stay distant, as a result of the lack of positive experience of fatherhood in their own lives. This wound in your heart may not yet have healed. Certainly fatherlessness is never God's plan. Do not give in to discouragement, however, and do not lose hope. The Church is always called to reveal God the Father. Allow Christ to show you the Father who never abandons his children, but rather offers his only begotten Son. If you have not already done so, allow Christ to guide you in order to see your father as He sees him. Jesus will not leave you without the grace necessary to forgive and heal your father. This may happen in conjunction with the graces offered to you through your spiritual fathers, your priests, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Through your discovery of the Fatherhood of God, our loving, eternal Father, you will be witnesses to the only fatherhood that never fails.

SENT FORTH BY CHRIST

The best friend of St. Gregory Nazianzen was St. Basil. When, as young men in their early 20s, their personal search for a deeper understanding of the Christian faith led them by separate paths to Constantinople, they soon developed a deep respect for one another. St. Gregory's description of this friendship is hopeful: "...if this is not too much for me to say, we were a rule and standard for each by which we learned the distinction between what was right and what was not." Their friendship inspired each to grow in virtue and freedom, to be less concerned for self and more eager to place his life at the service of others. I hope that each man reading this Exhortation will experience, if he has not already done so, the blessing of good friendships like the ones between the saints. I cannot imagine what my own life would be like without the good friends God has given me.

I hope, too, that you will take what is helpful in my message, bring it to the Lord in prayer, and go forward confidently in your vocation as men. Our life in Christ is not one of "do's and don'ts," but an adventure in authentic freedom. Embrace that freedom in order to place your life at the service of Christ, beginning in your home and radiating into the world.

APPENDIX C

God As My Friend

FOUR PRINCIPLES

- 1 Christianity is 100% about being in a friendship with God.
- 2 The only legitimate reason for becoming a Christian is to know God.
- **3** God is initiating a friendship with you.
- 4 You and God can be friends!

FOUR PROTOTYPES

- 1 Moses (Exodus 33)
- 2 Abraham (Isaiah 41 & James 2)
- **3** Disciples (John 15)
- 4 Skeptics & Seekers (Matthew 11)

FOUR PRACTICES

- 1 Time (Commitment & Investment)
- 2 Togetherness (Companionship & Involvement)
- **3** Talk (Conversations & Interaction)
- **4** Transparency (Candidness & Intimacy)

FOUR PROBLEMS

- 1 Religion: Rules, Rituals, and Regulations
- 2 Isms: Intellectualism, Emotionalism, and Legalism
- **Potential Traps**: Bible Smarts, Spiritual Disciplines, 'Sin' Avoidance, and Attendance/Activities
- 4 Feelings: Pride or Fear

FOUR POSSIBILITIES

- 1 Evade God
- 2 Encounter God
- 3 Engage God
- 4 Enjoy God



MEET THE COACHES Dr. Michael Brown

Dr. Michael Brown is the Founder, Lead Coach, and Chief Consultant of DMB Coaching. Over the past two decades through national leadership as a management consultant, life coach, motivational speaker, and organizational architect, Michael has engaged thousands of university and community clients in exploring their purposes, relationships, and directions, with special emphasis on developing in each of the Twelve Dimensions ® of Life.

Michael travels extensively regionally and nationally - sharing with college students, higher education professionals, business leaders, and faith communities his insights on human development, life management, dynamic relationships, social justice, redesigning and rebranding organizations for success, and his original Lifegiver ® Leadership Model.

Having studied journalism [B.A.] and political science at Ohio University; counseling and communication [M.Min] at Moody Theological Seminary in Chicago; and higher education administration [Ph.D.] at Bowling Green State University, Dr. Brown is the author of the "Twenty-One Father-Son Conversations About Love, Dating, Marriage, and Sexuality."

Michael has a passion for leading the charge with his wife (Teresa) of 27 years, four sons, and five daughters to be a force of positive change within culture. The Brown Family has served as a household for dozens of foster children over the past 15 years and was selected as the 2008 Bowling Green Family of the Year. Michael's personal hobbies include rigorous exercise, presidential politics, people watching, and peanut butter.



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MEET THE COACHES Shawn Cramer

Shawn Cramer has invested the past decade assisting college men in achieving their personal and professional goals as a Director of Campus Ministry for a consortium of twelve university campuses in the greater Denver area. After meeting with thousands of young men from all across the world, he distills this wisdom into powerful coaching opportunities in order to help young men take practical steps into a positive and progressive portrayal of manhood.

With an enthusiastic social media following, Shawn furthers this masculine developmental theme by turning parenting moments with his son into engaging posts called Man Training. He holds a B.S. in Mathematics from the University of Northern Colorado and an M.A. in Theology and Urban Development from Western Theological Seminary.

Shawn married his high school sweetheart, Shayna, and together they have two kids: Jace, a eight-year-old man-child, and Kylie, a five-year-old independent spirit.



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