

# **Gauging and Growing Your Spiritual Health:**

## **Spiritual Health Assessment (Online Edition)**



Epiphany United Methodist Church  
Vienna, VA Est. 1961

### What this Assessment Is (and Isn't)

It is a gift to be able to respond to the grace God has shown us, to mature into the image of God, and to participate in the healing of our souls. This assessment is designed to help you visualize some parts of your life and spiritual health that may need more attention or present a growing edge for you. No single assessment is able, however, to give you a complete picture of your spiritual health. Health is holistic. Care for the body, mind, and soul all weave together; Where one is neglected the rest suffer. While there are certain general guidelines, what makes a person more or less spiritually healthy may vary depending on a person's unique history and place in life. Finally, because only God can see our hearts, any test made by humans is subjective on some level and can reflect the designer's understanding of discipleship. I apologize for the ways this assessment will fall short. The assessment that follows then is designed to help you think critically about your spiritual health and offer some suggestions for improving it. Do not take it for law, but do not take it lightly, either!

### Does This Assessment Imply We Are Saved by What We Do?

Yes, and no. Our cooperation with the work of God in our souls will necessarily be expressed in how we live our lives, public and private. In that sense, what we do does actually affect our relationship with God. However, by asking you about your habits this assessment is not implying that we grow in grace by our own power and initiative apart from the work of God in us.

### How the Assessment Works

The questions on this assessment are drawn from the "General Rules of the United Societies"<sup>1</sup> the outline of the what John Wesley<sup>2</sup> and the early Methodists believed the life of a discipleship looked like. The General Rules are 1. Do No Harm 2. Do Good and 3. Attend Upon the Ordinances of God (or "practice the Means of Grace"). In the *Book of Discipline*, John Wesley parsed these rules out for his followers in 18th century England. For our purposes this assessment attempts to re-parse his examples for 21st century Americans. Prayerfully the heart will be the same.

Each question will present a scenario or habit and you will be offered multiple choices of your reaction or your experience of the habit. Your responses will be tallied and you will be given a quotient in each of the four areas of discipleship: acts of devotion, acts of worship, acts of mercy, and acts of justice. These represent the private and public facets of 'works of piety' and 'works of mercy' that Wesley identified as the proof of your soul growing in God's image. These quotients are not meant to breed shame nor complacency. **They are not 'grades'**. They are tools to help you see an area of your spiritual life you may be overlooking.

Before we begin, let us pray:

*Merciful God, grant me the clarity of thought  
To see through myself,  
to see myself as I truly am  
and how you see me;  
To see through my perceptions and desires  
and to discover your truth.  
Amen.*

Please circle the letter that best represents your response to the prompt.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* ¶104. The *Book of Discipline* contains our denomination's beliefs, doctrine, and history, and outlines our church government, policies, and procedures. It is revised every four years by the General Conference.

<sup>2</sup> John Wesley (1703-1791) was an Anglican priest who founded the Methodist movement to revive the Church of England.

1. When I make a mistake, I usually...
  - a. Try to fix it privately, but hope no one notices
  - b. Admit it, and try to fix it
  - c. Hope no one notices
  - d. Refuse to believe I made the mistake
  
2. I join other christians in worship...
  - a. Sunday, when I am in town.
  - b. Weekly, wherever I am (either on Sunday or another day).
  - c. I worship weekly, but not always with others.
  - d. Less frequently than weekly.
  - e. I can't always worship with others weekly, but I want to
  
3. When I see someone asking for help or assistance, I...
  - a. Wish I could, but I usually don't have anything to offer or don't have time.
  - b. Always take time to see how I can help them.
  - c. I feel terrible, but I usually don't stop.
  - d. I sometimes stop and offer help
  - e. I donate to charities that can help people in their situation.
  
4. I fast (from food or anything else)...
  - a. I don't currently have a practice of fasting
  - b. During Lent.
  - c. Weekly.
  - d. At various times during the year.
  
5. When I spend my money, I...
  - a. Prefer to shop at places with the lowest prices.
  - b. Prefer to shop at places that I know do not mistreat their employees or manufacturing workers (Fair trade, ethically sourced, no sweatshops...etc)
  - c. Have done research about more ethical places but I don't prioritize that when I am out and about.
  - d. Only buy name brand, and shop at nicer places.
  
6. I read scripture...
  - a. Only during worship.
  - b. Every day.
  - c. When I remember to.
  - d. More frequently at certain times of the year, but not consistently.
  - e. I do not yet have a habit of reading scripture.
  
7. I involve my family and friends in my work for justice in our community.
  - a. No, but I would like to.
  - b. Yes.
  - c. No.
  - d. I do not yet regularly work for justice in my community.

8. When someone in the church, at my work, or in my neighborhood is sick, I...
  - a. Visit them.
  - b. I check in with them, and ask how I can help.
  - c. Usually don't notice.
  - d. Ask about them and pray.
  
9. In regards to volunteering or leadership in worship or church life, I...
  - a. Have considered my gifts but don't know where I can fit in.
  - b. Don't know my gifts or what I can do.
  - c. Agree to serve when asked.
  - d. Volunteer to use (or grow) my gifts without being asked.
  - e. Usually don't participate.
  
10. I pray for others (not in my family)...
  - a. Each day
  - b. On Sundays during prayer time
  - c. When I hear about something difficult they are experiencing
  - d. I don't have a practice yet of regularly praying for others.
  - e. Most days
  
11. In regards to my money...
  - a. I often spend more than I have.
  - b. I am probably more frugal than I need to be.
  - c. I buy nicer things but I keep within a responsible budget.
  - d. I try to buy only what I need.
  - e. I spend freely on others, but I am frugal regarding my own needs
  
12. I regularly observe Sabbath by...
  - a. I don't have a regular practice of sabbath rest
  - b. By taking a day completely off from work.
  - c. I can't take a day away from work, but I find time during the week to rest.
  - d. Sunday morning is the only sabbath I observe.
  
13. I find time to worship with my family, friends, neighbors, or coworkers during the week by...
  - a. Praying and reading a devotional together.
  - b. I don't have a practice of worshipping with others outside of Sunday.
  - c. Saying grace before meals.
  - d. I don't have a practice of worshipping with others outside of Sunday, but I would like to.
  
14. When I realize I am very stressed, I...
  - a. Do something to divert my attention.
  - b. Just try and push through it.
  - c. I recognize I have unhealthy coping mechanisms.
  - d. Rest, or find something life-giving to do.
  - e. Ask for help.
  
15. When I am not able to be in worship with my usual congregation I...
  - a. Try to worship with another congregation.

- b. Check the church website or recordings of the service or sermon.
  - c. Tend not to think much of it.
  - d. Resolve to definitely worship next week.
16. When I realize I have not seen or spoken to a family member, church member, or neighbor in a while, I...
- a. Pray for them.
  - b. Try to check in with them.
  - c. Don't usually notice.
  - d. Intend to check in but usually don't get around to it.
17. I...
- a. Have more money and possessions than I and my family need to survive.
  - b. Am careful to only keep as much money and possessions as we need to get by.
  - c. Donate my money and possessions, but still keep more than I need.
18. How often do you donate possessions, clothes, blood, and money to those in need?
- a. Regularly
  - b. Whenever asked
  - c. Whenever I feel the need
  - d. I have no regular practice of giving to those in need.
19. I pray for my enemies or those I do not like...
- a. Only when the pastor does on Sunday.
  - b. When I feel I have been wronged.
  - c. Daily or weekly.
  - d. I do not yet have a practice of praying for my enemies or those who have hurt me.
20. I reflect on my spiritual life and struggles I am facing...
- a. With others regularly.
  - b. Internally, but regularly.
  - c. Whenever I feel I am having a hard time.
  - d. I do not usually find myself reflecting on my spiritual life.
21. When leaders or officials are making decisions that threaten, hurt, or oppress people, I...
- a. Work to find ways to hold them accountable (protest, phone calls, civil disobedience...etc)
  - b. Find myself only getting involved when it involves me or my family.
  - c. Get angry, but don't usually get involved.
  - d. I don't usually get involved in politics.
22. I visit people in prison...
- a. I don't interact with those in prison.
  - b. Regularly in person or through letters.
  - c. I pray or volunteer on behalf of those in prison..
  - d. I have great sympathy for those in prison, but don't know how to be in ministry with them.
23. When I have free time...
- a. I read, watch, or do things that give me life or bring me closer to God.
  - b. I read, watch, or do things which divert my attention.

- c. I move to the next thing on my to-do list.
24. I say negative things about someone...
- a. Constructively, and only when they are present.
  - b. Whenever they do something I find wrong.
  - c. I try not to say negative things about people, true or not.
  - d. I often say negative things about people I do not like, to them or to others
25. I participate in Holy Communion...
- a. Whenever it is offered at my church...
  - b. Weekly, whether at my church or another.
  - c. Only once a month, whether it is offered more frequently or not.
  - d. I do not yet regularly participate in Holy Communion.
26. I pray...
- a. Only on Sundays.
  - b. Daily.
  - c. Only at meals.
  - d. Only when I feel happy, stressed, or worried.
  - e. I do not yet have a regular practice of prayer.
  - f. Several times a week, but not yet daily.
27. When I notice problems in my community...
- a. I trust elected officials to deal with it.
  - b. I want to help, but don't know how
  - c. I resolve to vote for new officials next election.
  - d. I find a way to work and join others in fixing them.
  - e. I may notice problems, but I don't usually get involved.
28. How often do you spend quality time with your children or check on your family members?
- a. Each week.
  - b. Each day.
  - c. Whenever they or I need something.
  - d. Less frequently, but whenever I think of them.
  - e. Whenever they reach out to me.
29. I am more likely to invite people to worship with my congregation when...
- a. I find they are new to the area.
  - b. I find they used to worship with us but no longer do.
  - c. I find out they have a faith life but do not regularly worship anywhere.
  - d. I find out they have no faith life.
  - e. I do not yet have a habit of regularly inviting people to worship with my congregation.
30. How do you spend time with the marginalized in our community?
- a. I want to but do not know how.
  - b. I want to but I feel I am unable to.
  - c. By volunteering regularly.

- d. I currently do not have a habit of serving the marginalized.
  - e. I occasionally serve the marginalized, or support groups that do.
31. Do you have a habit of worshipping on Holy Days that are not on Sundays (examples include Christmas Eve, Easter vigil, Holy Week worship, other prayer vigils)
- a. Only Christmas Eve
  - b. Yes, as often as I can
  - c. Only if my congregation offers one
  - d. I do not have a habit of attending worship apart from Sunday mornings
32. I have talked with my children, family, and friends about the importance political involvement has in a life of discipleship.
- a. Yes
  - b. No, but I would like to
  - c. No, I think that would be inappropriate

## Assessment Feedback

Before you see the results of your assessment I want to reiterate two things: 1) this is not a 'grade' and 2) this -like any assessment like it- is imperfect. Discipleship and spiritual health is something that by its very nature cannot be quantified. Discipleship is the orientation of your heart and life towards God and towards others, and this will be expressed differently in our lives depending on our age, levels of ability, personal history, geographic location, levels of personal freedom...etc **These results are not meant to breed either shame or complacency.** Your quotient is only meant to bring to light some areas of discipleship you might be overlooking. Attention to these areas will improve your spiritual health.

### Acts of Mercy

Acts of Mercy are those habits we have regarding interpersonal relations, serving those around us, and addressing the immediate needs and wounds we encounter. The questions in this category also addressed dispositions and feelings we may have that would affect our interactions with our neighbors. Questions that addressed acts of mercy were: 1, 3, 8, 16, 18, 22, 24, and 28

My total number for acts of mercy: \_\_\_\_\_. Divide this by 8 to get your quotient. My mercy quotient is \_\_\_\_\_ out of five.

### Acts of Justice

If doing Acts of Mercy can be likened to treating the symptoms of an illness, doing Acts of Justice would be treating the illness itself. Acts of Justice address the larger, more systemic cause of the needs and wounds that we address by doing Acts of Mercy. Questions that addressed acts of justice were: 5, 7, 11, 17, 21, 27, 30, and 32

My total number for acts of justice: \_\_\_\_\_. Divide this by 8 to get your quotient. My justice quotient is \_\_\_\_\_ out of five.

### Acts of Devotion

Acts of Devotion are personal acts of piety intended to cultivate a life of prayer and align your mind and attitude with Christ's. Questions that addressed acts of devotion were: 4, 6, 10, 12, 14, 19, 23, and 26.

My total number for acts of devotion: \_\_\_\_\_. Divide this by 8 to get your quotient. My devotion quotient is \_\_\_\_\_ out of five.

### Acts of Worship

Acts of Worship are when Act of Devotion are shared, giving them an interpersonal and public nature. This includes not only worship within a congregation but also in a family setting or with neighbors or coworkers as able. Questions that addressed acts of worship were: 2, 9, 13, 15, 20, 25, 29, and 31.

My total number for acts of worship: \_\_\_\_\_. Divide this by 8 to get your quotient. My worship quotient is \_\_\_\_\_ out of five.



Spiritual Health Assessment Key  
September 2017 Edition

How to Get Your Results

Each response choice for the assessment's questions is assigned a number value between one and five. Some response values are used more than once in some questions, and some values are not used at all in others. Lower numbers correlate to response that indicated more growth may be needed, and higher numbers correlate to those answers indicating an instance of good spiritual health. On the previous page you'll find the list of questions that addressed each of the four areas of spiritual health: mercy, justice, worship, and devotion. Add up your total point value for each category and then divide that number by eight to find each quotient.

Your lower numbers are the areas you will want to look into improving. If you have a higher number in one category, find someone with a lower number and help them strategize ways to improve. If you have a lower number in a category, find someone with a higher number and ask them to help you strategize to improve. *All baptized Christians have taken vows to help one another grow. Together we have what we all need to grow in love of God and love for each other!*

Question 1

- a. 4
- b. 5
- c. 2
- d. 1

Question 2

- a. 3
- b. 5
- c. 4
- d. 1
- e. 3

Question 3

- a. 3
- b. 5
- c. 2
- d. 4
- e. 4

Question 4

- a. 1
- b. 3
- c. 5
- d. 4

Question 5

- a. 2
- b. 5
- c. 3
- d. 4
- e. 1

Question 6

- a. 2
- b. 5
- c. 3
- d. 4
- e. 1

Question 7

- a. 4
- b. 5
- c. 3
- d. 1

Question 8

- a. 5
- b. 4
- c. 1
- d. 3

Question 9

- a. 3
- b. 2
- c. 4
- d. 5
- e. 1

Question 10

- a. 5
- b. 3
- c. 3
- d. 1
- e. 4

Question 11

- a. 2
- b. 3
- c. 3
- d. 5
- e. 4

Question 12

- a. 1
- b. 5
- c. 4
- d. 3

Question 13

- a. 5
- b. 1
- c. 4
- d. 2

Question 14

- a. 2
- b. 1
- c. 3
- d. 5
- e. 4

Question 15

- a. 5
- b. 4
- c. 1
- d. 2

Question 16

- a. 4
- b. 5
- c. 1
- d. 2

Question 17

- a. 1
- b. 5
- c. 3

Question 18

- a. 5
- b. 4
- c. 3
- d. 1

Question 19

- a. 3
- b. 4
- c. 5
- d. 1

Question 20

- a. 5
- b. 4
- c. 2
- d. 1

Question 21

- a. 5
- b. 3
- c. 2
- d. 1

Question 22

- a. 1
- b. 5
- c. 4
- d. 3

Question 23

- a. 5
- b. 3
- c. 1

Question 24

- a. 4
- b. 2
- c. 5
- d. 1

Question 25

- a. 4
- b. 5
- c. 2
- d. 1

Question 26

- a. 3
- b. 5
- c. 4
- d. 2
- e. 1
- f. 4

Question 27

- a. 2
- b. 3
- c. 4
- d. 5
- e. 1

Question 28

- a. 4
- b. 5
- c. 3
- d. 3
- e. 1

Question 29

- a. 4
- b. 4
- c. 4
- d. 4
- e. 1

Question 30

- a. 3
- b. 3
- c. 5
- d. 1
- e. 4

Question 31

- a. 2
- b. 5
- c. 1

Question 32

- a. 5
- b. 3
- c. 1