

Spiritual Formation GTS – Defined
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The nomenclature “spiritual formation” is the terminology used by the majority of conservative, evangelical seminaries in the United States today. Looking at the websites of Dallas Theological Seminary, Moody Bible Institute Graduate School, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Talbot School of Theology (Graduate School of Biola University), it is evident that this term is used regularly and as a core component of the curriculum and spiritual life emphasis of these schools. The key is how the term “spiritual formation” is defined. It is very legitimate and appropriate to use this term if it is rooted in the inerrancy of Scripture and as the process by which the Holy Spirit “forms Christ-like character in the life of the believer.” That’s how we define it at Grace Theological Seminary. It is essentially the doctrine of sanctification, a term which we also use at Grace, but spiritual formation has become a good descriptive term for conservative evangelicals to use to emphasize the formational process of Christ-likeness in the believer.

I am grateful that we require both a class in Spiritual Formation along with a class entitled Principles and Practice of Prayer at Grace Seminary. Over the years, some Grace students and graduates have bemoaned the fact that their seminary years were “some of the driest spiritually in their entire lives.” We are deeply committed to emphasizing our students’ daily walk with the Lord and the vital part their spiritual life plays in being effective and persevering in the challenging work of ministry.