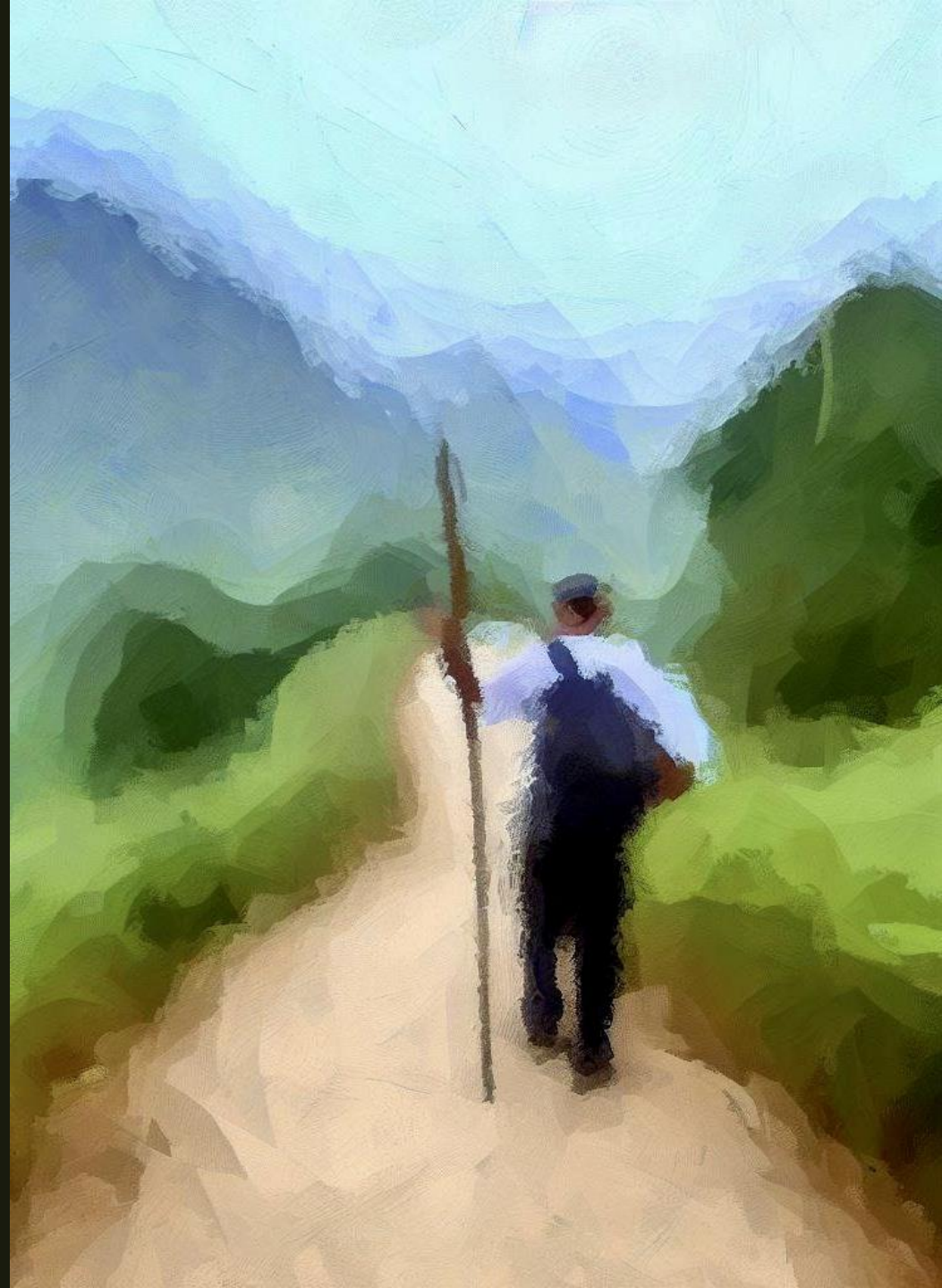


THE UPWARD JOURNEY 3
WAYS TO GROW
SPIRITUALLY



Recap of Session 2

- Key to growth is Spiritual Health
- Abiding in Christ, Connection
- Closing the *Telios* Gap
- Working out your personal growth goals

Do we think like this?





Assumptions

1. You are a spiritual being.
2. The greatest goal we can embrace in life is the goal to become like Jesus.
3. To do that requires practice - “spiritual disciplines”.

What do you think of these assumptions?

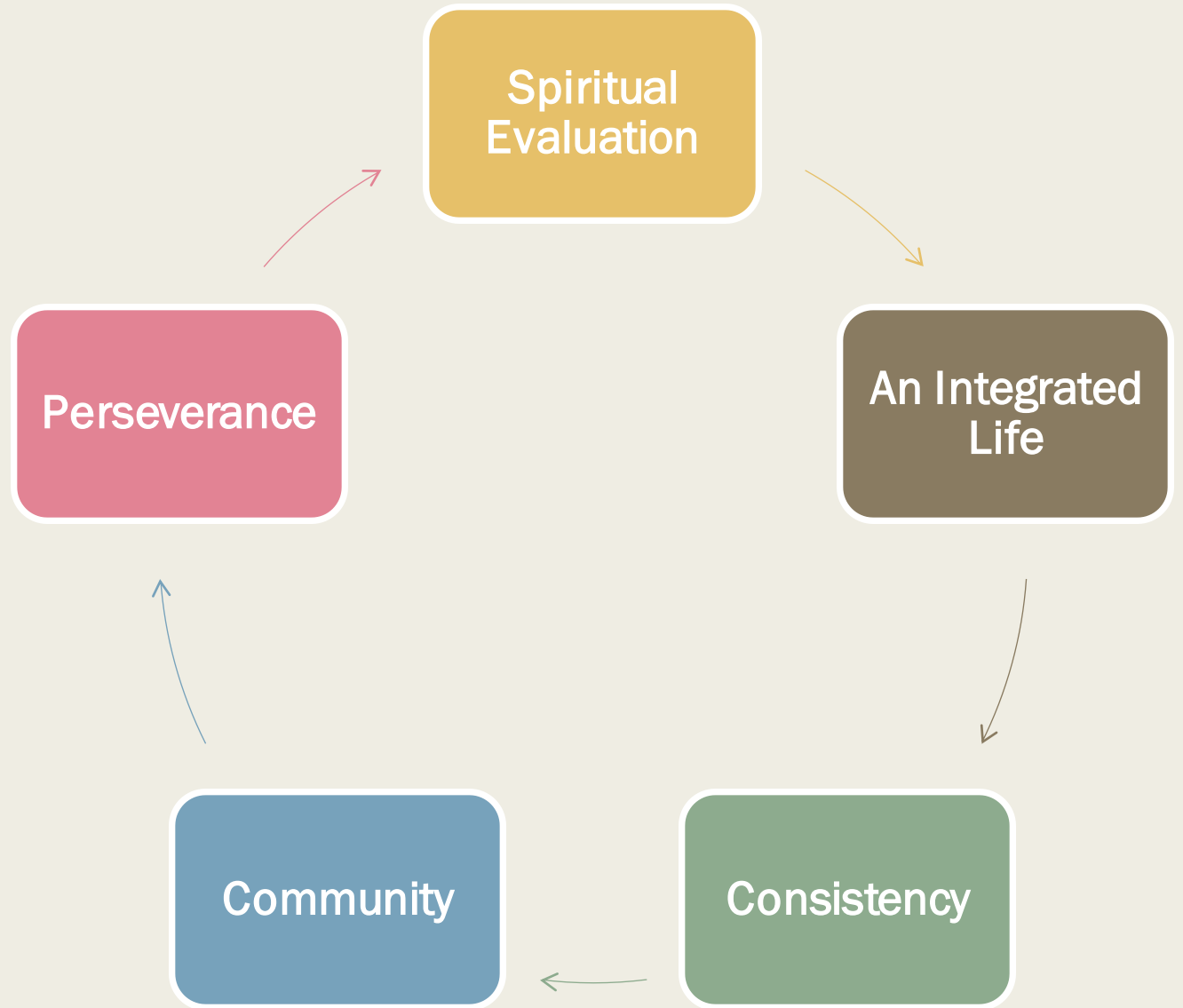
Is this a novel approach for you?

1 Cor 9:24-27

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? **Run in such a way** as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. **No, I beat my body and make it my slave** so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

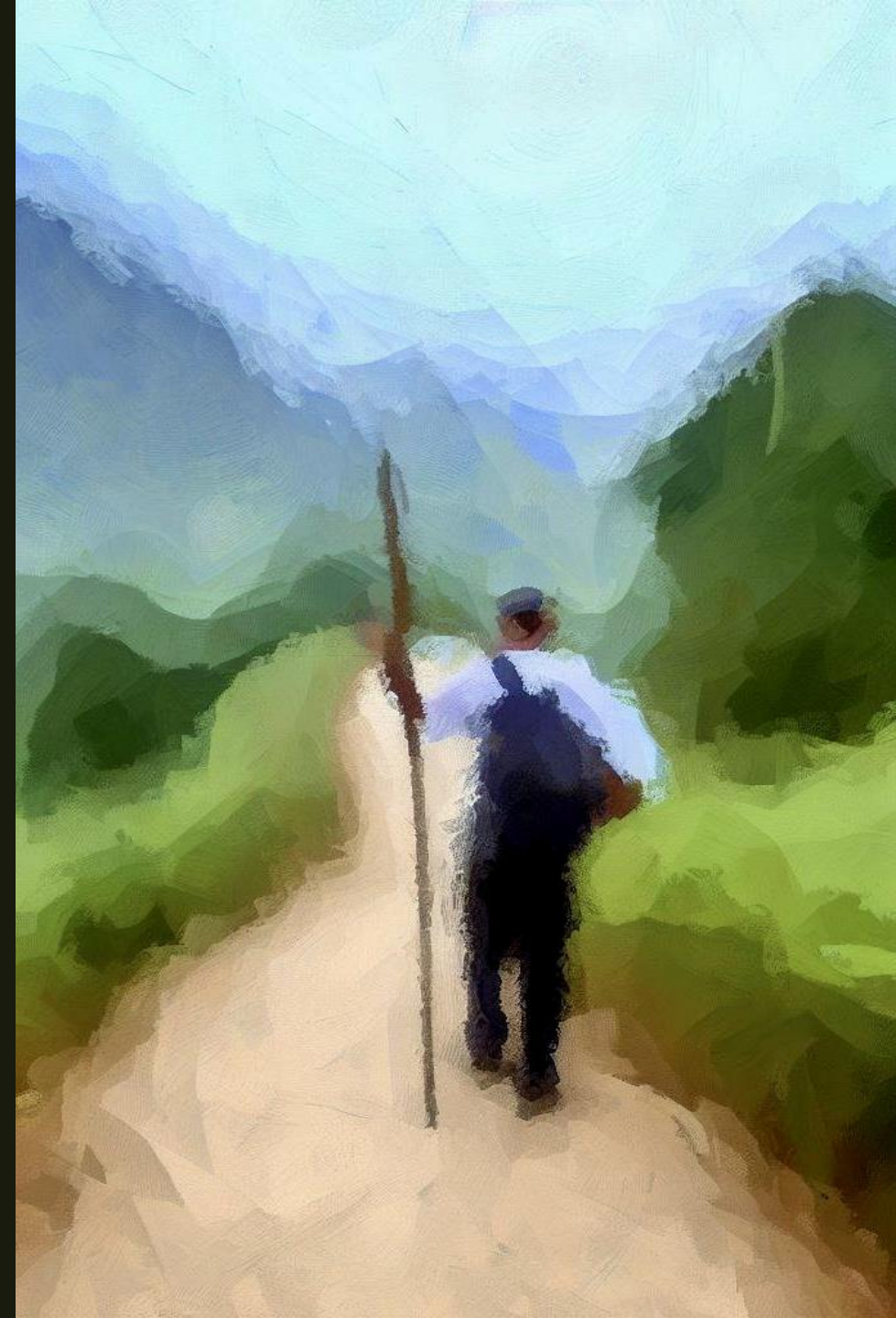
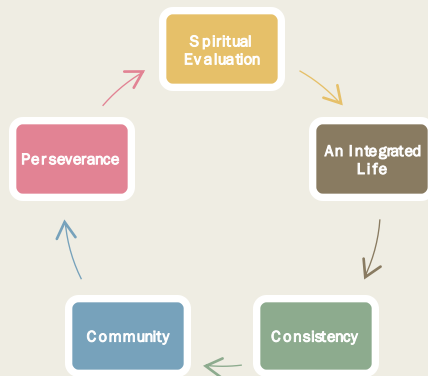
What do you get from this? What does this look like for you?

The Spiritual Transformation Circle



The Spiritual Transformation Circle

- Rest stops on a circular path up a mountain, not a linear process like a ladder.
- Is that a useful idea?
- Agree or disagree?



1. Spiritual Evaluation

- Where am I on this?
- What parts of my life do I want to grow in?
- Think character, not performance.
- *Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully. (Ps 42:3-4)*
- Examining self as approaching the temple.
- Do I have “clean hands”, “pure heart”, “attracted to what is false or not”, “honest tongues”
- Am I like Jesus in xyz area of life, attitude etc

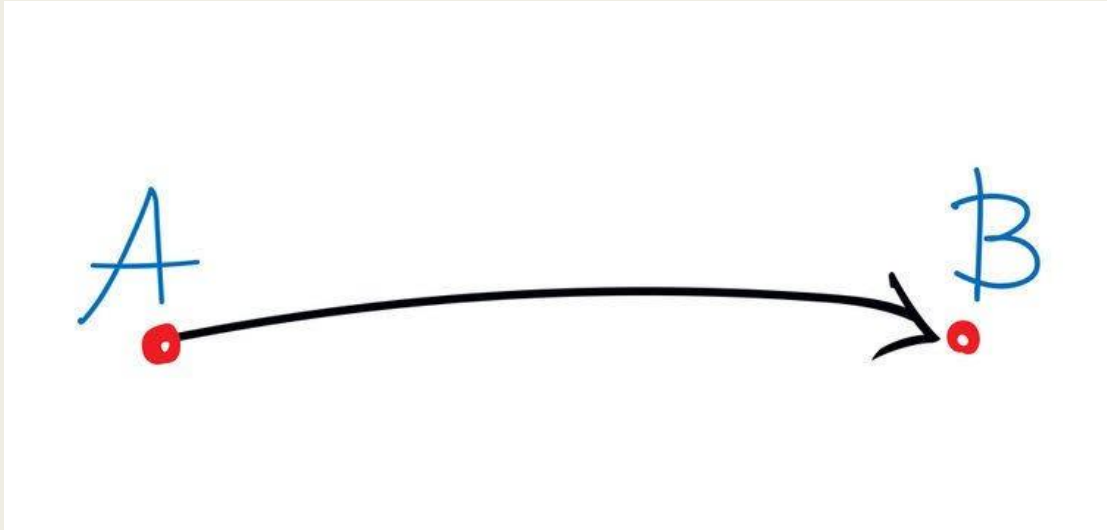
1. Spiritual Evaluation

Examples (p61):

- ❖ *I need to learn how to think about God consistently through-out the day. I desire to practice the presence of God in my life.*
- ❖ *I haven't grown spiritually. I'm at the same place today as I was this time last year. I don't want another year without spiritual growth. I want to be at a better place spiritually this time next year.*
- ❖ *I'm addicted to (a specific sin). I repent. I want to experience victory over this sin through God's grace, Jesus' help, and the Holy Spirit's power.*

Example: *I want to build spiritual friendships*

- 1) **Pray**: Give the goal to God. Ask him for help, guidance, specifics.
- 2) **Study**: Study out the related spiritual discipline – one another relationships. Gain conviction on need to grow in this area.
- 3) **Study an expert** in this area. Watch and learn.
- 4) **Share**: Share your goal with trusted friends. Give permission for them to ask about your progress. Ask specific questions about how to grow in this area.
- 5) **Plan**: Make an actionable plan. Eg I will meet with (x) each week for next four weeks and work on my relationship with (y). Start with small and achievable goals.
- 6) **Execute**: Work the plan.
- 7) **Evaluate**: Evaluate progress. May need to modify goal. Relaunch ok.



Spiritual Evaluation and Plan

- Point A = Where I am now.
- Point B - Where I want to be.
- Plan to get there



2. An Integrated Life

- Symmetry and Integration
- Balanced spiritual and physical life

Symmetry

- Remember Jesus grew in multiple areas (Lk 2:52)
- In Wisdom (spiritually)
- In Stature (physically)
- In Favour with God (spiritually)
- In Favour with man (socially/relationally)



Integration

- Spiritual growth ought to be integrated with the **whole** of one's life.
- Eg Don't spend your whole day studying the Bible but neglecting your family and other relationships. All parts of life working together.
- "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." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. (Mt 22:37-40)
- This an integrated response!
- Love God with **our whole person** and allow God to change the whole person.
- How would this apply to you?

Consistency

- Learning the *language* of spiritual growth
- “**Continue** to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” (Php 2:12-13)
- Intentionality, staying on it.
- How am I with consistency in general?





Community

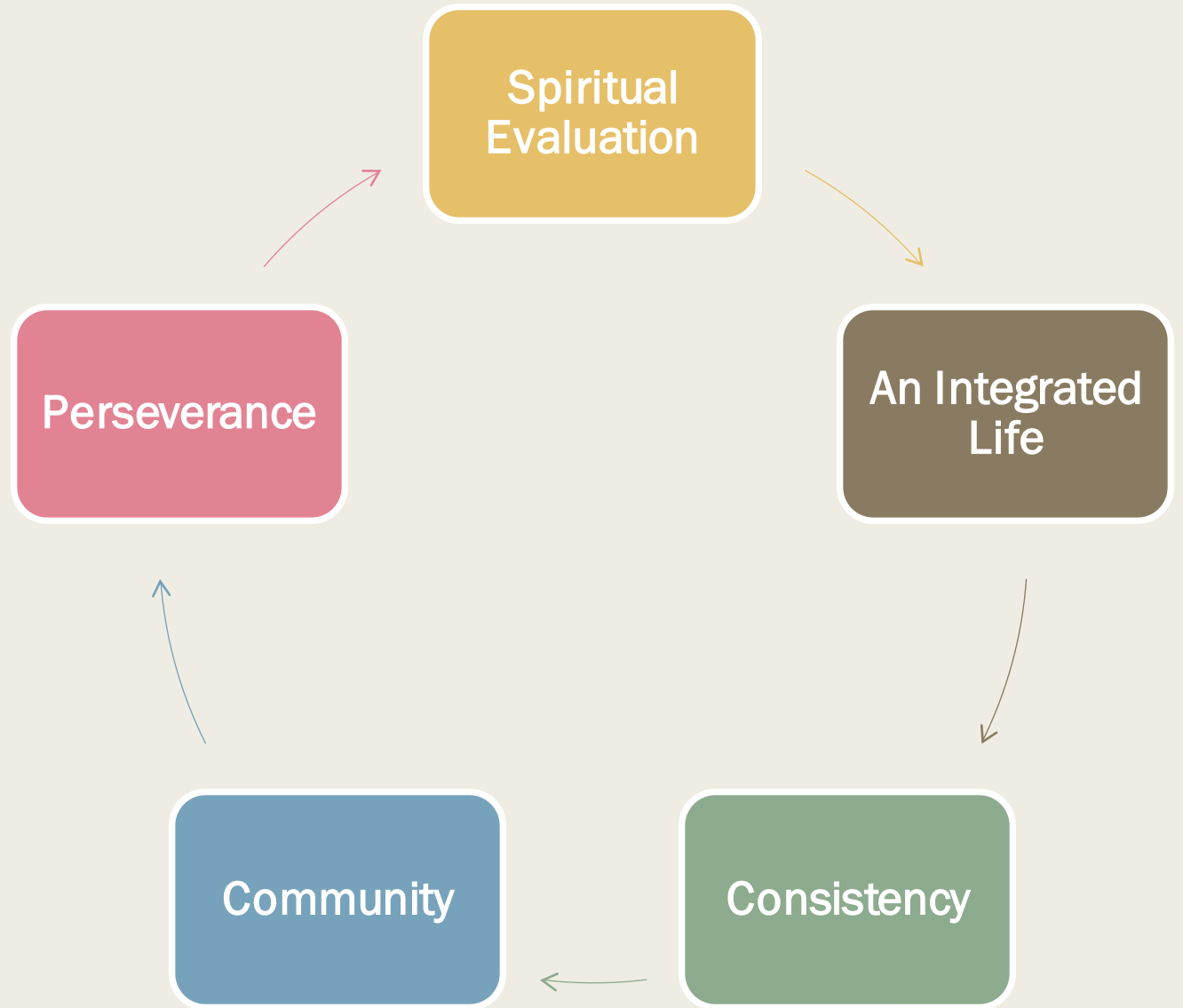
- **God speaks regularly to us through people who talk to us about the things of God. Certain people become living signs that point us to God. Whether in life or in memory, the people God puts in our lives can help guide us and show us the way.” -Henri Nouwen in Spiritual Discernment**
- **Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Eph 4:15-16)**
- **How would this work for you?**
- **Friends, family, teachers, brothers, others.**
- **Do I have access to a community in reality?**
- **What do I contribute by way of community to others?**

Perseverance

- For this very reason, you must **make every effort** to supply your faith with moral character, and to your moral character add knowledge, and to your knowledge add self-control, and to your self-control add steadfast endurance, and to your steadfast endurance add godliness, and to your godliness add mutual love for your brothers and sisters, and to mutual love for your brothers and sisters add unconditional agape love. For if you possess these qualities and they increase, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in the knowledge of our Master, who is Jesus the Messiah. Whoever lacks these qualities is shortsighted and blind. This person has forgotten the cleansing of past sins. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to certify your calling and election. For if you continue to do these things, then you will never fall, and you will receive a certain entrance to the eternal Kingdom of our Master and Savior Jesus the Messiah. (2 Pet 1:5-11)
- “Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning. Earning is an attitude. Effort is an action.”[Dallas Willard]
- How do you feel about the idea of *Perseverance*?
- Do you see Perseverance as a desirable spiritual quality?



The Spiritual Transformation Circle





Wrap-up

- Where am I right now in the spiritual transformation circle?
- Which step is the most challenging for me?
- Which step is the most exciting?
- What is my next step?
- What are my key take-always today?