

MARTINA KEAST MTS

EXAP

**PILGRIMAGE OF THE
SPIRIT: ADVANCING IN
SPIRITUAL
DISCIPLINES.**

Pilgrimage of the Spirit: Advancing in Spiritual Disciplines.

Martina Keast MTS EXAP GCSICA

LEVEL 2: SEARCH FOR SPIRITUAL WHOLENESS.

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Mission Statement

Spiritual Balance in Academic Life.

Vision Statement

We achieve spiritual balance by applying spiritual disciplines despite the complexities of academia, social commitments, and the overwhelming sense of responsibility.

Our passion:

Guide active students through life-changing interactions to experience God intimately.

Embrace the Foundation: Spiritual Wellness Coaching for a Balanced Life.

By participating in "Embrace the Foundation: Spiritual Wellness Coaching for a Balanced Life," you will embark on a transformative journey from insecurity and uncertainty to a life of authentic self-acceptance, spiritual grounding, and purposeful living. You will find the strength, support, and guidance needed to overcome past traumas, rediscover your true purpose, and build a resilient and fulfilling life anchored in faith and love.

About me:

I am a Spiritual Wellness Coach. I apply my 25 years of experience as a job coach for mentally and physically challenged adults, a Christian school supervisor, an intake at a women's shelter, a chaplain, a woman's pastor, and a recovery coach for a Christian ministry. I was a security guard, and I worked with sexually exploited men and women, and victims of domestic abuse. I partner with clients wishing to embark on a spiritual journey leading to improved self-acceptance, spiritual grounding, and purposeful living.

I am passionate about creating a sacred space where individuals can journey inward, explore their spirituality, and thrive in mind, body, and spirit.

I have four mini-courses that may be taken independently or in progression based on clients' needs.

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The ideal student:

You are looking for spiritual balance in daily life and a more profound relationship with Jesus Christ, one of the Trinity. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are very much involved in humanity.

This student values their relationship with God and will commit time to study and apply the knowledge as a potential world changer. You may experience triggers, some sudden and some subtle. If you have any concerns, you will bring them to the facilitators, who may suggest additional counselling or therapy.

Our courses may address some of the triggers; however, it is advised to always have a trusted professional or pastoral counsellor on hand should the need arise.

Good Questions to ask yourself.

Do I want to learn about and from God?

Do I want Godly wisdom?

Do I want to experience spiritual transformation?

Or am I happy to be in control of my life?

Am I satisfied living my life guided by my flesh, myself?

If you desire Godly transformation, you are in the right place. If you wish to me more like Jesus, He will take you on a journey inward.

Psalm 63:1

O God, You are my God,
Early I will seek You,
My soul thirsts for You
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.

A Modern-Day Student

As a modern-day student, three courses from graduating with a doctorate in Christian Ministry, I can genuinely say I've come past the point of reflection; I am now experienced in coaching my avatar: college, postgrads, and university students who look for spiritual balance.

I incorporate diverse spiritual perspectives in the ministry areas I am called to. During my years of reflection on my journey toward spiritual wholeness, I showed an openness to learning about and understanding various spiritual beliefs without judgment, if possible. I was learning to express genuine respect for each individual's unique spiritual background and cultural context.

In the past, I worked with victims of domestic violence and human sex trafficking victims as a Life skills coach, using a translator for a Guatemalan participant. As a chaplain, I worked with addicts of various kinds—I.e., gambling, codependency, alcohol, drugs, etc. As a woman's pastor, I ministered to homeless addicts who lost everything, including their children. I teach 4 Keys to Hearing God's Voice to two Groups in Pakistan: Lahore and Kasur. I am also an administrator for a Christian ministry in Kajiado, Kenya. In both cases, translators help get my messages across.

I encourage a safe space for the students to express their thoughts, questions, and uncertainties about spirituality. I facilitate an open and respectful dialogue that encourages exploration and learning. I cannot be sure that the participants feel safe to ask freely, as I do not understand the language and rely on translators.

I find myself mindful of potential trauma associated with diverse spiritual experiences. The world is unsafe, and humans have been through various traumas when I met them.

I incorporate creative outlets such as art, music, or writing into coaching sessions for spiritual expression. Experience taught me that allowing clients to tap into their creative streams as a form of self-discovery and spiritual exploration has been extremely helpful.

Active listening, paraphrasing, and empathy are essential skills for receiving an individual's spiritual narrative, including some paths they have taken.

I use biblical principles as a framework, allowing flexibility for clients from diverse backgrounds to interpret and apply them in their way. God, as in the Trinity, does not need me to correct them. They are heard, validated, and coached, not destroyed, and broken.

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There will be a time when they have questions or when I can ask questions to clarify my understanding of what they are saying and speak to it.

I created an online course textbook, **The Dwelling Place: Reflections on my Journey Toward Spiritual Wholeness**. I love the fiction/non-fiction approach used throughout the textbook. A workbook comes with the package.

There are three ways to benefit from reading and applying the information presented in **The Dwelling Place Project**.

The first way is to read for the sake of reading.

The second way is to read it and engage further using the workbook.

The third way is to join an online class. The benefit is a more profound transformation.

These Four Entry Levels,

The Search, The Pilgrimage, The Journey, and The Balance are prerequisites to the 3 month-long course called: *The Dwelling Place: Reflections on my Journey Toward Spiritual Wholeness*.

The Dwelling Place is a book about spiritual growth with characters to illustrate the content presented in the 26 chapters.

Some of the topics discussed:

Dark Night of the Soul/Spirit

Furnace of Transformation

Movement

Lectio Divina

Biblical Meditation

Two-Way Journaling

Spontaneous Creativity

Cultivating Spiritual Wellness Through Spiritual Disciplines: A Guide for the Academic Journey. ¹

Setting Sacred Time:

“The most important thing I had to do was to read the Word of God and to meditate on it. Thus, my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reproved, and instructed.” George Muller ²

Psalm 139:17-18: “How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can’t even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!”

Begin your journey by earmarking a specific time each day dedicated to your meditation practice. Whether it’s the tranquility of the early morning, a peaceful break between classes, or the quietude before bedtime, consistency is the linchpin for reaping the full benefits of meditation.

How much time do you set apart for reading the Word of God?

Creating a Sacred Space:

“Take this as the secret of Christ’s life in you: His Spirit dwells in your innermost spirit. Meditate on it, believe in it, and remember it until this glorious truth produces within you a holy fear and wonderment that the Holy Spirit indeed abides in you!” Watchman Nee

Psalm 1:1-2 “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, or stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, he meditates day and night.”

For this content (taken from my project as cited below), we can find a dwelling place at a retreat centre with others, in solitude, or at home, going for a walk or even a bike ride. We can have a deeply felt human experience with our deep heart’s desire to fulfil the divine calling God placed in us for this earth, anywhere.

¹ In Part. OpenAI. (2024). *ChatGPT* (3.5) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com>

² Ashley Evans. February 2, 2024. <https://biblereasons.com/meditation/>

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Having a Bible, a journal, a songbook, and gospel or worship music is helpful when we set aside time to meditate, listen, and worship. I will share these experiences, but first, let's look at surprising and unexpected dwelling places that open us to God.

You may find yourself in a dwelling place that is not your choice when God gets involved. He sets up people, places, and things to help change and transform our lives. William M. Kinnaird and Gerald May say it this way,

. . . a time of deep travail when all seems hopeless and useless when the spirit is broken and to go on seems pointless, too excruciating. We want to give up and die, even by our hands. God's so-called presence and promises are of no help. We're too numbed and devastated to be encouraged by them. (Kinnaird, 1994)

The dark night process eases the restraints our attachments place on us, enabling us to live more fully and lovingly. It deepens our trust in God's presence and the essential goodness of life and ourselves. It leaves us emptier, knowing less and having less than when we first started—and this emptiness makes us freer than we would ever have dared to expect. (May 2004, pp. 103-103)

A Poem: The Dwelling Place³

The dwelling place invites us to belong. It may offer lush, colourful trees, flowers, and grass waving in the wind as one goes for a prayer walk. It may feel like an angry place where, like the sea, it is one minute roaring, then in the next still. It may stink like the fishy smell of seawater.

A dwelling place may give a sense of God's majesty compared to snow-covered and beckoning mountains in the near distance. Occasionally, I experienced respite. The delicious smell of campfire cooking reminds me everything is transparent in the dwelling place. God dwells there. Because He is present, inner healing happens in His safe place.

A heartfelt sense of belonging
Lush, colourful trees, flowers, and grass waving in the wind
The Sea, one-minute roaring, then still

The fishy smell of seawater, strong
The mountains are in the near distance.

³ Martina Keast. October 25, 2016.

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Snow-covered and beckoning

The majesty of God’s creation invites breathing room.
The delicious smell of campfire cooking
It is all so clear in my dwelling place.

He dwells there.
Inner healing happens.
I am safe.⁴

Where is your sacred place?

Engaging Scriptural Wisdom:

“The important aim in Christian meditation is to allow God’s mysterious and silent presence within us to become more and more not only a reality but the reality which gives meaning, shape, and purpose to everything we do, everything we are.” — John Main

Psalm 119:105-106 “Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path. I took an oath, and I will keep it. I took an oath to follow your regulations, which are based on your righteousness.”

Integrate the timeless wisdom of the Scriptures into your meditation routine. Begin with prayer, seeking divine guidance as you embark on this journey of self-discovery. Draw inspiration from passages that resonate with your current experiences, fostering a connection between the sacred and the introspective.

How do you integrate the wisdom of Scripture?

Expressive Creating in Worship

“When you cease from labour, fill up your time in reading, meditation,

⁴ (Keast, *The Dwelling Place: Reflections on my Journey Toward Spiritual Wholeness*, 2023) pages 28-29.

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and prayer: and while your hands are labouring, let your heart be employed, as much as possible, in divine thoughts.” David Brainerd

Psalm 95:1-5 Come before Him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.

Consider incorporating worship into your meditation routine, allowing the expressive arts to become a channel for spiritual connection. During meditation sessions, engage in creative activities like singing, playing an instrument, or creating visual art as a form of worship.

Describe how you did this movement.

Self-care and Spiritual Wellness:

“Meditation is the tongue of the soul and the language of our spirit; and our wandering thoughts in prayer are but the neglects of meditation and recessions from that duty; according as we neglect meditation, so are our prayers imperfect,—meditation being the soul of prayer and the intention of our spirit.” Jeremy Taylor

1 Corinthians 6:19-20: Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body.”

In the pursuit of balance, it is essential to recognize that self-care is not selfish but a necessary component of overall well-being. You recharge your physical self and nurture your spiritual wellness through activities like meditation, exercise, healthy eating, and adequate sleep.

What activities help you take care of yourself considering Spiritual Wellness?

Fundamental principles of spiritual wellness.

These principles of spiritual wellness incorporate the foundational aspects of the Christian faith, personal connection with God, intimacy with Jesus, and creative expressions of worship and reflection. We look at the Biblical Foundation, Prayer to God (Trinity), Worship in Song, Creative Arts, Authorship and Action, Surrender, Hearing God’s Voice, and Dialogue Journaling.

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Spiritual wellness is about fostering a deep, meaningful relationship with the Divine and living in alignment with spiritual values and teachings. These principles, in part, describe an evangelical mystic. We will study the difference between New Age, Catholic, and Evangelical Mystic at Level 3.

Biblical Foundation:

Scriptural Study: engaging in a regular study of sacred texts, primarily the Bible, to gain wisdom, guidance, and insight into one's spiritual journey.

Application of Teachings: Applying biblical teachings in daily life, seeking to align actions with the moral and ethical principles found in the Scriptures.

Can you name a moral and an ethical principle found in the Scriptures?

Prayer to God as in the Trinity:

Communion with God: Establishing a personal relationship with God through prayer, acknowledging the Father, the Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Intercession: Praying for personal needs and interceding for others and the world, expressing a sense of interconnectedness and compassion.

Write a prayer of intercession.

Worship in Song:

Praise and Adoration: Expressing devotion to God through songs and hymns, acknowledging His greatness and expressing gratitude.

Corporate Worship: taking part in communal worship through congregational singing fosters unity within a spiritual community.

Does a modest dress code of worship leaders enhance your ability to focus on God?

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Creative Arts

Expressive Worship Involves Using various forms of creative arts, such as visual arts, dance, or drama, to express and deepen one's spiritual connection.

Celebrating Creativity as a Divine Gift: Recognizing and celebrating the creative abilities as gifts from God, expressing spirituality through artistic endeavours.

Please create a creative piece based on something the Lord is showing you. Use any medium you have available. Do not go out and buy anything.

Authorship and Action:

Co-authorship with God: Acknowledging one's life as a collaborative narrative with God, actively participating in unfolding the divine plan.

Living with purpose involves taking intentional actions aligned with spiritual values, contributing to the greater good, and fulfilling one's purpose in God's design.

What do you believe is God's purpose for you here on earth?

Surrender:

Relinquishing Control: Surrendering personal desires and control to God, trusting in His plan and guidance.

Submission in faith means surrendering to the divine will and understanding that true strength comes from reliance on God's grace.

When did you surrender to the divine will of God? Did it make a difference in your life?

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Hearing God's Voice:

Discernment: Developing the ability to discern God's guidance through prayer, meditation, and reflection on Scripture.

Quiet Reflection: Creating space for silence and solitude to better hear God's still, small voice.

The 4 Keys to Hearing God's Voice: stillness, vision, flow, and writing.

What do you know about the 4 Keys to Hearing God's Voice?

Dialogue Journaling:

Reflective Writing: Engaging in a written dialogue with God, expressing vision, movies, thoughts, questions, and emotions through journaling.

Recording Spiritual Insights: Documenting personal growth, revelations, and insights gained through reflection and conversation with God.

Ask Jesus: **Lord, is there something You'd say to me at this point in my studies?**

Please submit your answers to drmk2024@gmail.com

Below you will find extra work. You may find this challenging and upsetting. I am not asking for perfection. I am asking you to do your best to keep track of your engagement with the three Spiritual Disciplines of your choice. Also, be curious about your sleep habits. It takes time to create new habits. This is your opportunity to make that effort. You might actually be surprised at how often you get enough sleep, and how often you engage in prayer, worship, Bible Reading etc etc.

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Spiritual Discipline Engagement			
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Day 1	Date:	Discipline 1	Discipline 2	Discipline 3	Comments
Day 2					
Day 3					
Day 4					
Day 5					
Day 6					
Day 7					
Day 8					
Day 9					
Day 10					
Day 11					
Day 12					
Day 13					
Day 14					

Sleep Schedule					
Day 1	Date:	hours	night mares	dreams	Comments
Day 2					
Day 3					
Day 4					
Day 5					
Day 6					
Day 7					
Day 8					
Day 9					
Day 10					
Day 11					
Day 12					
Day 13					
Day 14					

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