

## READING AND DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

# *Care of Mind/ Care of Spirit*

by

Gerald G. May, M.D.

1. In his book, Gerald G. May describes various views of spiritual direction held by members of different religious traditions (p. 2). How do you view spiritual direction? Have you ever experienced it?
2. Soul “reflects the essence of one’s existence. . . . [I]t is manifested through, rather than divorced from, body, mind, or any other facet of one’s being. *Spirit* means to me the vital, dynamic force of being, that which is given by God and brings the soul into living reality” (p. 7). How do these definitions differ from your views on soul and spirit? How are they similar?
3. May talks about four forces that affect human spirituality: spiritual longing, God’s longing for us, a force that

opposes growth, and evil (pp. 24–25). How have you experienced these forces in your own spiritual life?

4. An experience of union “constitutes a realization (in the literal sense) of an aspect of life that is constantly true but that goes unrecognized most of the time” (p. 37). Think of a time when you had an experience of union. What was it you realized? How did it affect your spiritual life?
5. John of the Cross recommended not paying particular attention to experiences because “if an experience were truly from God, he felt, its truth would become evident naturally in one’s life. If it were of something ‘else,’ it would certainly not be worthy of attention” (p. 43). Have there been experiences in your life that you felt must have meaning even though you could not figure out what it was? Does this statement change your thinking? Why or why not?
6. What activities do you engage in that are not truly restful even though they are meant to be? What activities might you engage in that are truly recreational in that they leave you with “greater energy and clearer awareness” (p. 61)?
7. “God can speak to us in destruction as well as in creation” (p. 62). Has this been true in your life? How might you encourage God to speak to you, even in times of destruction?
8. How was God portrayed to you as a child (pp. 73–76)? How has that affected your adult relationship with him?

9. Have you ever heard God speak clearly to you (pp. 83–84)? How did you know it was God? What did he say to you?
10. How have emotional responses to spiritual searching been manifest in your life (p. 95)?
11. May talks about the importance of continually reorienting yourself toward God in the course of spiritual direction (p. 116). How might this reorienting be valuable in everyday life? What methods might you use to go about it?
12. When are you most open and present to God (p. 122)? Is it in the morning, afternoon, or evening? How can you foster this openness?
13. “Diagnosis looks to label disorder so that it can be corrected, but discernment seeks to discriminate among inclinations so that a proper direction can be followed” (p. 152). Is it possible to use both diagnosis and discernment in your life? If so, how?
14. Has there ever been a time in your life when you tried to limit interaction with a person who made you uncomfortable by steering this person toward another individual (p. 180)? How might you act with more care toward such people?
15. Why do you think it is important to be “very clear about the roles we play and when” (p. 202)? How might you go about defining the roles you play in all

areas of your life in a way that is beneficial for you and for others?

16. How has this book changed your views on spiritual direction and therapy? Is there anything practical you can take away from the book to incorporate into your daily life?