

Reading the Bible as Literature: A Key Dimension of Spiritual Formation for the Literarily Inclined

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Abstract

Spiritual formation is introduced as an inclusive concept which encompasses various dimensions of the development of personal spirituality. For many Christians, this obviously includes deepening their comprehension of the Bible, not least multiple meanings (polysemy) of a large number of terms in the Old and New Testaments. It is argued that an awareness of the large number of literary genres in which the Bible was written and a greater understanding of such literary devices as metaphors, imagery, hyperbole, and point of view can both stimulate and continue to nurture interest in the reading of Scripture and enhance one's spiritual development by providing greater insight into the Word of God. Additionally, certain fallacious notions about reading the Bible as literature are discussed.