

THE PRACTICES OF AN APPRENTICE

How did your practice of reading Scripture go following the last session?

THE SHAPE WE ARE IN

Becoming a disciple means allowing Jesus to reshape the designs and rhythms of our lives.

We try and change our behavior but not our disciplines. Yet, our habits and our disciplines form our behavior.

Real change isn't behavior modification.
Real change is spiritual transformation.

THE POWER OF PRACTICE

Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

—Romans 7:24-25

Your spiritual “why” is God’s purpose for you.

Your spiritual “how” is God’s power through you.

The practices are our power!

The practices of Jesus are essential to our spiritual transformation.

JESUS' PRACTICES

Much of the Gospels are the stories and teachings of Jesus' extraordinary life and behavior. However, small details that give a glimpse of Jesus' practices are littered through the Gospels.

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

—Mark 1:35

PRACTICES DEFINED

We are all on a journey to focus more on the practices of Jesus

The Practices are disciplines based on the lifestyle of Jesus that create time and space for us to access the presence and power of the Spirit and, in doing so, be transformed from the inside out.

They are how we do what we can—sabbath, pray, read Scripture—to make space for God to transform us into the kind of people who can do what we currently cannot—live and love like Jesus.

They are how we draw on grace...

They slow our busy lives down to the pace and presence of “the God of peace.”

Sabbath

Specific times to stop, rest, delight, and worship

Prayer

Intentional time to communicate and commune with God

Fasting

Going without to minimize distraction and give yourself more fully to Jesus. Purge your mind of the noise of the world and the flesh of its crutched habits, hear and be heard by God in prayer, and stand in solidarity with the poor.

Solitude

Intentional time in the quiet to be alone with yourself and God.

Generosity

The giving of our time, talent, money, and resources.

Scripture

Immersing our minds and imagination in the wonder of the ancient texts.

Community

Doing life with other followers of Jesus in deep, loving friendship.

Service

Following Jesus example of meeting the needs of others, especially the most vulnerable.

Witness

Practicing hospitality and preaching the gospel of Jesus through our lives.

SOME PRACTICE QUICK-FACTS

No matter what your personality is or what stage of life you are in , these practices WILL grow your apprenticeship with Jesus. Some version of these practices should find their way into the disciples of Jesus.

Almost anything can become a spiritual discipline if we offer it up to God as a channel of his Grace.

Practices are not a religion and are not meant to be used to govern or manipulate others.

Practices are a means to an end: to live and love like Jesus.

Practices are not the whole spiritual life, they are just one part of it.

They are essential for those who desire to be transformed to become more like Jesus.

THE EFFECT OF PRACTICES

Heart, Hands, Head, Community, Legacy

The Heart Of Apprentice

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

—Proverbs 4:23

Quietning the self-serving noise of the world to find peace in the sacrifice.

The Hands of an Apprentice

When you supply it, they gather it. You open your hand to feed them, and they are richly satisfied.

—Psalm 104:28

The practices that help us open our hands. Generosity is a practice and is deliberate.

The Head of an Apprentice

For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

—2 Corinthians 2:16

Practices that allow our prideful noise to quieten and slow us down to hear His instructions.

The Community of an Apprentice

One day soon afterward, Jesus went up on a mountain to pray, and he prayed to God all night. At daybreak, he called together all of his disciples and chose twelve of them to be apostles. Here are their names: Simon (whom

he named Peter), Andrew (Peter's brother), James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Simon (who was called the zealot), Judas (son of James), Judas Iscariot (who later betrayed him).

—Luke 6:12-16 (NLT)

Practicing life together in unity and peace.

The Legacy of an Apprentice

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and the one who is wise saves lives.

—Proverbs 11:30

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

—John 15:5

Practices that help us see past ourselves and the time span of our lives, so that we can see clearly our kingdom impact.

Our practices ready us to love and have that love amongst ourselves. It is how we practice love. After all that is how Jesus' disciples would be identified.

THIS WEEKS PRACTICE: Sabbath

From Practicing the Way

To grow, we need more than content; we need real, embodied practice.

In our age of exhaustion, Sabbath is one of the most neglected and most crucial of all the practices of Jesus. But it can be daunting to begin, as it's an entire 24 hours, and you're swimming against the current of our entire culture. Powerful forces keep us tethered to our devices, distractions, and the endless queue of work and responsibilities.

So, start small. If a full Sabbath day is too much for you, start with a Sabbath morning or afternoon. Set aside a few hours after church or early on a Saturday to embrace the four movements of Sabbath: stop, rest, delight, and worship.

Four things to keep in mind as you begin:

01 Begin by connecting with God. The Hebrew people called this “sanctifying the day,” setting it aside from the other six days. You could light two candles, or pray a Psalm or share a meal or begin with Sunday worship at your church. But have a clear ritual or moment with God that begins and ends your Sabbath time.

02 If you can, spend part of the day with your family or friends who follow Jesus. You could throw a Sabbath meal or just spend unhurried time in conversation.

03 Do whatever makes you come alive in God. Nap, read poetry, play basketball with your kids. Pursue whatever activities make you feel joyful, rested, and alive

to God; whatever it is you do that makes heart spontaneously burst into gratitude and worship.

04 Keep at it. Integrating Sabbath keeping into your life usually takes months or years, not weeks. Just smart small and aim at joy.