

PRACTICING • WHAT I • PREACH

Practicing What I Preach

Following Jesus is complicated. For most of us, life regularly incentivizes selfish, anti-social behavior. It's in our nature, and it's sewn into the fabric of society. This means we all need help sticking with our commitment to follow Jesus in the countless small, difficult ways that can be easy to overlook. We're relational creatures, which is why we need groups. From day one, our church measured success by how well we connect children, students, and adults in circles rather than rows, because life is better connected.

Getting Started

1. What went right this summer? What would you do differently, if you had a do-over?

What About You?

2. When was the first time that you noticed that religious attendance didn't always lead a person to treat others well?
3. Have you ever found yourself attending an institution one hour per week without actively following Jesus alongside other people?
4. When have you found your faith in Jesus most easy to practice on a daily basis? When has it felt most remote? What were your experiences of community like during these different seasons?



Look It Up

Matthew 5:17, 22 – 29, 44, 6:14–15, 7: 12, 24

5. Why is it significant that Jesus came to fulfill, rather than abolish, the law?
6. What is the difference between a merely vertical faith, and a horizontal faith (to use Andy's terminology)?
7. How did Jesus treat the seemingly insignificant social relationships that religion tends to skip over? What evidence do you see in the text?
8. What makes it impossible to be right with God while being at odds with those around you? Why can't we be fine with God and dismissive of others?

Putting It All Together

9. How is you *doing* right now? Where are you at odds with other people? Your own best self?
10. Who in your life keeps you accountable in the horizontal aspects of your faith? Do you have anybody?
11. What will you do in the coming weeks to ensure that your faith goes beyond the individualistic, consumer-mindset of modern religion? How will you prioritize circles over rows?
12. Who in your life could use some encouragement finding a group?

