



# Practicing the Way

SESSION 04: THE PRACTICES

## TEACHING NOTES

The practices of Jesus are essential to our spiritual formation. They are how we do what we **can** do — sabbath, pray, read Scripture — to make space for God to transform us into the kind of people who can do what we currently **cannot** do — live and love like Jesus. And they slow our busy lives down to the pace and presence of “the God of peace.”

- 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.
- Practices are a means to an end: to live and love like Jesus.
- We approach deeper changes in our life indirectly, not directly, by practicing ancient disciplines that open us up to God to change us at the deepest level.
- Practices are not the whole of the spiritual life, they are just one part of it.
- They are essential for those who desire to be transformed to become more like Jesus.
- One of the most important practices for our age of exhaustion is Sabbath — a full day set aside to stop, rest, delight, and worship.

## NOTES

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## SCRIPTURE

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 1v35

The practices:

**Sabbath**, Prayer, Fasting, Solitude, Generosity, Scripture, Community, Service, Witness.

## PRACTICE

### Sabbath

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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:

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **04 Keep at it.** Integrating Sabbath keeping into your life usually takes months or years, not weeks. Just start small and aim at joy.

Here's a short guide to planning out your next Sabbath.

- When will you sabbath? (Include your start and end time)
- How will you mark the beginning and end of your sabbath time? (A ritual or liturgy or prayerful moment)
- What will you do with your devices?
- What do you need to do to prepare? (Grocery shopping, emails, errands, work tasks, phone calls, etc.)
- How will you include friends and family?
- What will you do to fill your heart with joy and peace?
- How can you create sabbath for those who have none?



## *PRACTICE REFLECTION*

01 What was challenging about your Sabbath practice?

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02 Where did you feel delight in this practice?

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03 Where did you most experience God's nearness?

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04 Is there anything different you would like to try related to the practice of Sabbath?

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