



Practicing the Way

SESSION 02: FORMATION 01

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FORMATION 01

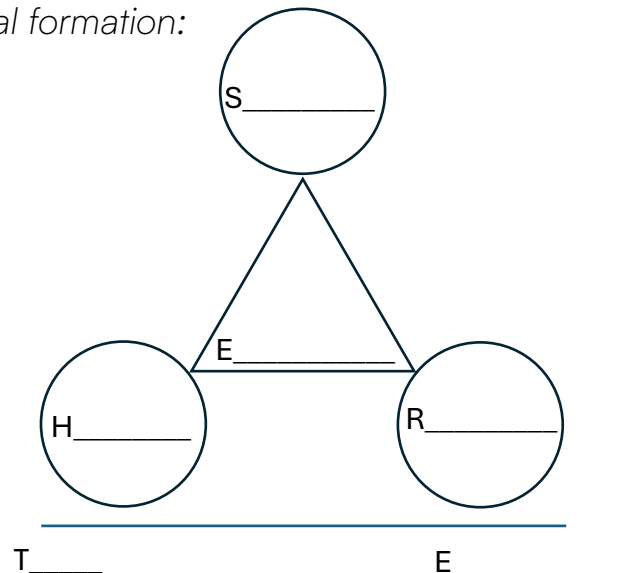
TEACHING NOTES

Spiritual formation isn't a Christian thing or even a religious thing; it's a **human** thing. To be human is to grow, to mature, to adapt over time. Formation is simply the process by which our "spirit," or inner person, is formed into a particular shape or character. Over a lifetime, we are spiritually formed by a complex alchemy of genetic inheritance, family patterns, childhood wounds, education, habits, decisions, relationships, environments, and more.

The problem is, most of our spiritual formation is unintentional. ***It just happens.*** And often, we are "conform[ed] to the pattern of this world," **more** than "transformed by the renewing of [our] mind."^{*}

NOTES

Unintentional spiritual formation:



SCRIPTURE

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

—Romans 12v2

PRACTICE

Formation Audit

Our exercise for this session is to take an inventory of all the forces that are currently forming you.

1. This is one of the longest exercises in this Course, and we recommend you carve out a quiet time and place to spend ample time in thoughtful reflection and prayer.
2. Invite the Spirit of Jesus to come and illuminate your mind, silence the voice of the evil one, and to “give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better,” and that “the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.”*
3. Remember to answer *honestly* and *non-judgmentally*. You will likely feel your heart drift toward shame and denial, both of which will sabotage the effectiveness of this exercise.
4. Above all, do this exercise *with God*. Slowly and prayerfully, and with your heart at peace.

Habits — What habits make up your everyday life? Write out your habits.

Morning routine:

Activities of a typical workday:

Evening routine:

Activities of a typical weekend:

Reflection: How do you think your habits are shaping you as a person?

“
The question
isn't are you
becoming
someone,
it's who
or what
are you
becoming.”

Possible effects of following “the pattern of this world”:

- Stress • Hurry • Anxiety • Fear • Insecurity • Hypervigilance • Jealousy • Anger • Irritation • Impatience
- Resentment • Outrage • Pride • Distraction • Numbness • Overwhelm • Exhaustion • Discouragement
- Loneliness • Isolation • Shame • Division • Disconnection • Lying • Dirty speech • Sarcasm • Put downs
- Dishonour of authority • Contempt • Careerism • Overwork • Materialism • Discontent • Debt
- Laziness • Alcoholism • Addiction • Substance abuse • Impulsiveness • Lust • Pornography • Racism
- Bigotry

Possible markers of following the Way of God’s Kingdom:

- Love • Joy • Peace • Patience • Kindness • Gentleness • Faithfulness • Self-control • Faith • Hope •
- Unhurried living • Simplicity of life • Calm • Generosity • Contentment • Freedom • Warmth and affection • Relational connection • Community • Sense of belonging • Equity • Diversity • Trust •
- Acceptance • Authenticity • Honesty • Integrity • Harmony • Vulnerability • Compassion • Restfulness
- Diligence • A sense of meaning and purpose • A clear sense of direction • Creativity • Growth

Relationships — What relationships make up most of your life?

Family:

Friends:

Work:

Community:

Other:

Reflection: How are these people shaping you as a person? The key questions to ask are: What kind of person do I become when I’m around this person? What do they draw out in me or suppress in me?

Stories you believe — What are the “stories” you have come to believe?

What stories do you believe about God? (What is he like/not like? How does he feel toward you?)

What stories do you believe about yourself? (How does God see you? How do others see you? What kind of person are you? What do you see for your future?)

What stories do you believe about happiness? (What do you think will make you most happy and peaceful? Is it God? Money? Marriage? Success? Vacation?)

What stories do you believe about the meaning of life? (What do you think matters most? Perhaps your career? Family? Health? Something else?)

Reflection: What are the core stories of my life? Are they forming me as a person?



Environment — What are the cultural distinctives of my environment?

City: What is my city like? What is it known for?

Nation: What is my nation like? What are its highest cultural values?

Generation: What are my generation's values?

Digital algorithm: What are the algorithms feeding me news, information, and social connection like?

Ethnic and/or socio-economic group: What are the values and cultural norms and expectations of my cultural heritage and socio-economic class?

Reflection: How am I being formed or deformed by the cultural forces that are “normal” in my city/nation/generation/social media feed, but possibly far from the vision of Jesus?



Experience — What life experiences have most shaped me into who I am today?

Family of origin: What is my family like? What are its highest values? Deepest dysfunctions?
Greatest legacy?

Traumatic events: Have I experienced a traumatic event? What story has my body wordlessly learned from that trauma?

Key experiences: What are the key moments on the timeline of my life that have altered the trajectory of my story?

Spiritual autobiography: What are the key moments of my spiritual journey thus far?

Reflection: How have my experiences formed and deformed me over the years? Where do I still need healing? What do I need to never forget and hold on to? What am I still missing?



PRACTICE REFLECTION

01 What did you find helpful about taking the Formation Audit?

02 When you consider the ways you are being unintentionally formed, what felt most challenging?

03 Did anything surprise you?

PROCESS TOGETHER

In your group, take this handout along so that you can write down things that you hear that might be helpful to you or that you find interesting.

This is an important opportunity to join in the discussion and share experiences.

It's important to remember that not everyone will have the same experience as you, so listen and be a helpful encouragement to the other members.

FURTHER RESOURCES

The Practices — An in-depth look at each of the practices including a further 4 sessions presented by John Mark Comer and team on Prayer can be found on the website:

www.practicingtheway.org/prayer

The book - While not essential, we recommend reading the book *Practicing the Way* by John Mark Comer alongside this Course, as it will greatly enhance your learning experience.

The Podcast - Episode 02 of the Practicing the Way podcast:

link.practicingtheway.org/course-s2b