



RHYTHMS OF LIFE

ARE YOU TIRED? WORN OUT? BURNED OUT ON RELIGION? COME TO ME. GET AWAY WITH ME AND YOU'LL RECOVER YOUR LIFE. I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO TAKE A REAL REST. WALK WITH ME AND WORK WITH ME — WATCH HOW I DO IT. LEARN THE UNFORCED RHYTHMS OF GRACE.

MATTHEW 11:28–30 (MSG)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 RHYTHMS OF LIFE

4 HOW TO

5 LIFE CATEGORIES

7 ABIDE

9 MIND

11 BODY

13 RELATIONSHIPS

15 REST

17 WORK & MONEY

19 GOSPEL & HOSPITALITY

21 SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

23 EXAMPLE PLAN

24 BLANK PLAN

RHYTHMS OF LIFE

The questions and practices in this *Rhythms of Life* guide are designed to help you live with Jesus at the center of your life. Centering your life on Jesus does not have to remain vague or abstract. There are practical things we can do in order to more faithfully follow the Way of Jesus. Jesus wants all of His followers to find rest and experience the abundantly good life in His presence and plans, and we pray that this resource can help you to that end.

So what is *Rhythms of Life* all about?

The rhythms of your life are the regular patterns and schedules by which you live your life. For some, these rhythms are rushing out the door, squeezing in a meal, checking the phone too much, binge-watching Netflix, then crashing into bed too late at night. For others, these rhythms are life-giving relationships, planned and protected times of rest, generosity, and focused attention on God. We all have everyday things we do and seasonal rhythms throughout the year. The question is not *if* we have rhythms of life, but rather *what are* our rhythms of life, and are they healthy?

As followers of Jesus, we strive to pattern our lives after His. That is the basic idea of what it means to be an apprentice or disciple of Jesus. We should begin by listening to what *He says (Words)*, doing what *He does (Works)*, and living how *He lives (Ways)*. Our aim is to live with Jesus as our central commitment, so we should pattern our own rhythms of life after His.

So, what are Jesus' rhythms?

We see in the Gospels that Jesus built His life around three priorities.

- He devoted time to be with God the Father (what we call “Up” rhythms).
- He spent time with His Spiritual Family consisting of His disciples and anyone “who does the will of Our Father in Heaven” (what we call “In” rhythms).
- He went on mission with His spiritual family to bring the good news of His Kingdom to those in need (what we call “Out” rhythms).

Living out these priorities in our context will take intentionality. None of us will accidentally stumble into an Up, In, Out kind of life, so we encourage you to utilize this resource to help you architect your life in a way that is centered on Jesus.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

We designed this workbook as a simple guide for self-examination and awareness. We hope it will help you develop a way of life to intentionally spend more time with Jesus and become more like Jesus. These rhythms are not a one-size-fits-all list that is set in stone forever. Instead, this guide is meant to be a living document: a set of rhythms that will grow and change with your life through its different seasons. The life Jesus models for us is not lived in isolation, so consider doing this together in your Center Community (your Spiritual Family). To begin forming your personal *Rhythms of Life Plan*, follow these five easy steps:

Step 1 Review: Start by looking over the example of a *Rhythms of Life Plan* on page 23 and spend some time contemplating it. Consider how it relates to different areas of your life.

Step 2 Reflect: Prayerfully work through each *Life Category* one at a time. Take your time and really reflect on how you are currently living. List out your current rhythms and perform a biopsy on them. Ask these questions to have an honest examination of each one. Is it healthy? Why do I live that way? What is it producing in my life? Where will that lead me long term? Then imagine what a more intentional rhythm could look like for you in this season.

Step 3 Plan: As you complete each of the *Life Categories*, reflect and write down what new practices you will begin. You should then write those new practices on the *Rhythms of Life Plan* on page 24. Come back to the chart and fill in each *Life Category* as you work through them. You do not need to fill in every box; rather, start with a few and add more over time. Look back at the example plan on page 23 if necessary.

Step 4 Practice: Try it out! Spend a few weeks living into your rhythms, and see how it feels. If it feels burdensome, pay attention to why it feels that way, and consider what you need to change. What is working and what is not working? What is bringing you life? What is draining you? Talk about it with a family member, close friend, or someone in your Center Community.

Step 5 Adjust: Based on step 4, fine-tune your rhythms to be sustainable and life-giving, then commit to them for an extended season of time (we recommend a minimum of three months and a maximum of one year). During that time, give yourself grace and create space for reflection via journaling, talking to a friend, or just taking a walk and thinking about them. This time of reflection will help you see what effect a life organized around Jesus' priorities is doing for your transformation. Are you becoming a person full of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in the Kingdom of God?

LIFE CATEGORIES

Contrary to the way that most people think of it, your soul (Hebrew: *nephesh*) is not just the invisible part of you that flies off to heaven when you die. Instead, your *soul* is the meeting place of your whole person: the integrating center of your humanity—material and immaterial. Your will, mind, emotions, and body all make up your entire being, and your soul is the meeting place for every part of you.

The following *Life Categories* will help you apply *Rhythms of Life* to your soul—your whole person. If you neglect any of the following areas, you will not have a healthy soul.

1. Abide
2. Mind
3. Body
4. Relationships
5. Rest
6. Work & Money
7. Gospel & Hospitality

Each of these areas contributes to the health of our soul and requires attention. You will not have as rich a time of focusing on God in scripture if you live in a contrary way to His design in other areas of your life. God made us as integrated beings designed to bring the entirety of our lives before Him, not just scraps here and there. (For example, surrendering our mind to Him, but not our money). Each of these *Life Categories* provides opportunities for transformation as you learn to center your life on Christ. This transformation happens as we recalibrate our hearts in the presence of Jesus through the practice of spiritual disciplines.

Page 22 lists some spiritual disciplines to apply in each of the seven *Life Categories* listed above.

**WHAT DO YOU
NEED TO DO TO
GET HEALTHY
IN THOSE
SEVEN LIFE
CATEGORIES?**

ABIDE

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

John 15:4

Abiding means intentionally creating space for the Holy Spirit and the truth of God to transform us into people of love. Transformation does not happen primarily by our effort or striving to be better; instead, we are transformed by regularly being in His presence. We can take steps to set our lives before the One who can transform us, by creating regular rhythms of spending time with God. Learning to abide in Jesus is the pathway to renewal.

We abide in Jesus as we attentively live in His presence, obey His commands, and depend on Him for our needs. We see a beautiful image of abiding in John 15:1-11. Read the entire passage and reflect on the relationship Jesus is describing. We abide in Him (our action), and He bears fruit (His action) through us. In our abiding, we are filled with love from Jesus. In our abiding, the Father prunes out unhealthy things in our lives so Jesus can bear more fruit through our lives.

REFLECTION

Take some time, reflect, and work through these questions to help you examine your current patterns in regards to abiding in Jesus. Write these down in a journal.

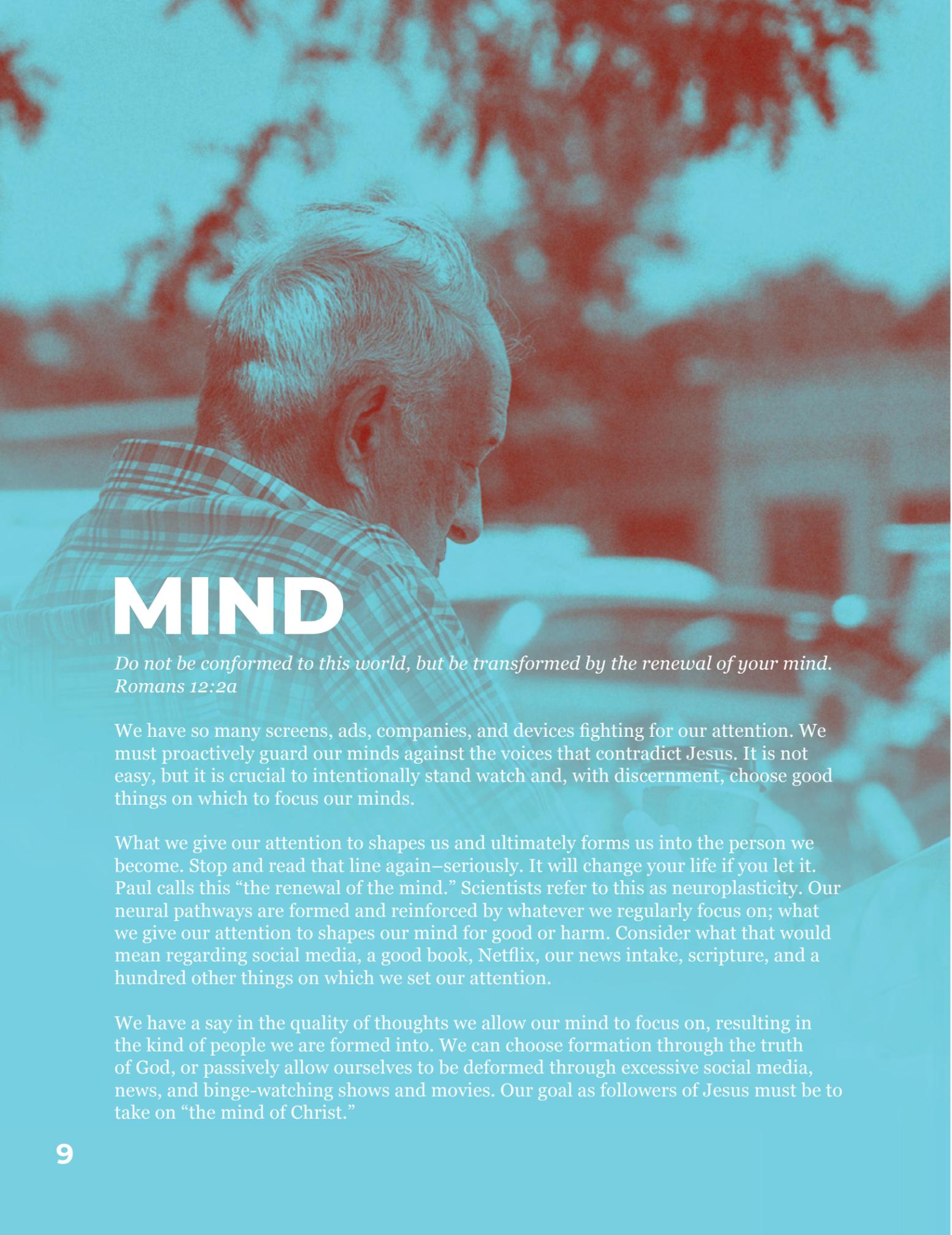
- What rhythms do you currently use to “abide in the vine”?
- Obedience to Jesus leads to greater intimacy with Jesus. We cannot slap on a little devotional time over a life of disobedience and expect a rich experience of His presence. Honest evaluation is needed. What areas of your life are you choosing to not listen to or obey Jesus?
- *If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. John 15:10.* Where do you need to repent so that you more fully obey and abide in His love?
- What do you need to stop doing in order to create space for a new rhythm of abiding in Jesus? For example, are you sleeping in too late or wasting your time on entertainment or media?
- What spiritual disciplines or practices would help you to have a regularly scheduled rhythm of abiding in Jesus? What do you need to start doing in order to continually abide in Him?

Examples: Morning prayer, reading scripture, listening to worship music, Sabbath, silence, solitude, memorizing scripture, praying and processing through journaling, a spiritual retreat.

Recommended Starting Rhythm: Commit to daily quiet time away from media and people where you are alone with God (ideally the first thing you do), church on Sundays, and a weekly Sabbath rest.

Pro Tip: Do not overcomplicate this, just spend time with Jesus!

You would not try to climb Mt. Everest in a day, so start small. Begin by adding an unrushed, protected thirty minutes a day. Then, add your new practices to your *Rhythms of Life Plan*.



MIND

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.
Romans 12:2a*

We have so many screens, ads, companies, and devices fighting for our attention. We must proactively guard our minds against the voices that contradict Jesus. It is not easy, but it is crucial to intentionally stand watch and, with discernment, choose good things on which to focus our minds.

What we give our attention to shapes us and ultimately forms us into the person we become. Stop and read that line again—seriously. It will change your life if you let it. Paul calls this “the renewal of the mind.” Scientists refer to this as neuroplasticity. Our neural pathways are formed and reinforced by whatever we regularly focus on; what we give our attention to shapes our mind for good or harm. Consider what that would mean regarding social media, a good book, Netflix, our news intake, scripture, and a hundred other things on which we set our attention.

We have a say in the quality of thoughts we allow our mind to focus on, resulting in the kind of people we are formed into. We can choose formation through the truth of God, or passively allow ourselves to be deformed through excessive social media, news, and binge-watching shows and movies. Our goal as followers of Jesus must be to take on “the mind of Christ.”

REFLECTION

Take some time, reflect, and work through these questions to help you examine your thought life. Write them in your journal.

- What we give our attention to shapes us and ultimately forms us into the person we become. Is what you watch, read, look at, think about, stream, scroll, and listen to making you more like Jesus, or less like Him?
- What unhealthy rhythms of the mind are you currently living out? List as many negative habits you can identify. For example, do you wake up and look at your phone first thing?
- How much time are you spending on your phone or other screens? What is primarily shaping your worldview? Is it that news channel or the Word of God? What are your entertainment habits?
- What do your current patterns produce in your life (for example, anxiety, lust, anger, materialism)? Are they dulling your love for God or stirring up your affections for God?
- What do you need to do to better guard your thought life? What do you need to stop doing in order to filter what comes into your mind?
- How can you proactively set your attention on Jesus? What disciplines and practices can you begin in order to fill your mind with “what is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise?”¹

Examples: Scripture reading and memorization, reading or listening to soul-nourishing books, worship music, podcasts, church on Sunday, “parenting” your phone by setting limits and boundaries, changing your media consumption, and discerning the moral quality of things you listen to and watch.

Recommended Starting Rhythm: When you wake up in the morning, do not start with time on your phone. Instead, give time to something that will start the day with Jesus (worship music, scripture, sermon podcast, or prayer). Create boundaries on when and how much you will be on your devices. Set standards for the media you will consume (is this dulling my love for God or stirring up temptation in my heart?). Then, commit to a rhythm of regular intake of God’s truth through multiple mediums: reading the Bible, a Christ-centered book, podcasts, audiobooks, worship music, etc.

Pro Tip: Begin each day with gratitude and hope, set your mind on the goodness of God if you want to be refreshed!

If you are new to this rhythm, start small. First, stop unhealthy habits and add one new healthy rhythm of the mind. Then, add your new practices to your *Rhythms of Life Plan*.

¹Philippians 4:8

BODY

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
1 Corinthians 6:19b-20

God created us spirit and flesh, mind and body, immaterial and material. Therefore, a holistic, embodied spirituality is essential to following the Way of Jesus. Yet, in a day and age that ignores boundaries, many of us are bringing great harm to the body that God has blessed us with.

Sadly, there are too many examples to list. It is common in our culture to live at such a frantic pace that we burn the candle at both ends and exhaust ourselves. To numb ourselves, we engage in escapist behaviors (substance abuse) or destructive coping mechanisms (self-harm). We fail to steward our bodies by neglecting proper nutrition. Another common temptation is to obsess over our body image. We are tempted to pursue pleasure outside of God's design for sexual intimacy to be reserved for a husband and wife. In our culture, sexuality often becomes just a selfish pursuit of pleasure, not the self-giving act of service designed to knit together the souls of a husband and wife. But scripture calls followers of Jesus to "offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God."² We are called to live in our bodies in a way that honors Jesus and points to His Lordship.

²Romans 12:1

REFLECTION

Take some time, reflect, and work through these questions to help you examine how you steward your body. Write them in your journal.

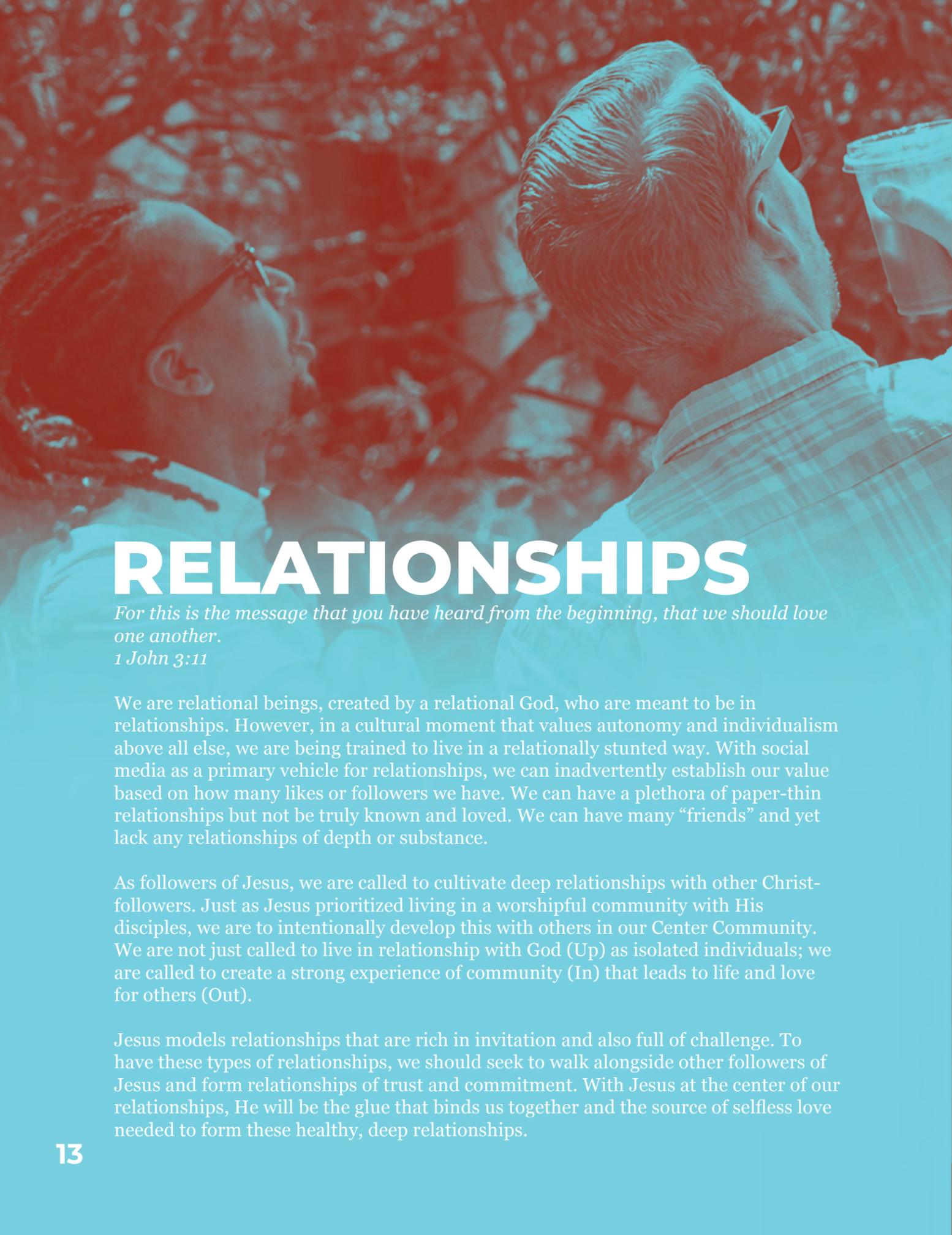
- Examine your patterns of self care for your body. How are you stewarding your body in the following areas? (For example, sleep, diet, pace of life, exercise, caffeine, doctors visits, sexuality, etc.)
- Perform a biopsy on each of your current patterns. Is it healthy? Where does it come from? What is it producing in your life? Where will that take you years down the road? Will the fruit of this pattern honor God?
- Are there any escapist behaviors or coping mechanisms that need to be addressed? Some need to be **eliminated** (getting drunk), **minimized** (too much late-night TV stealing my sleep), or addressed through **professional help** (self-harm).
- What new practices should you start doing to honor Jesus with your body?
- Who can you talk to about this? We are not to live as isolated individuals, but a community of people who help each other follow Jesus *together*. Seek the wisdom and support of others!

Examples: Eat healthily, get enough sleep, exercise, limit alcohol intake, have a regular time to go to bed and wake up refreshed, take vitamins, go to the doctor annually, honor God with your sexuality by living out Jesus' teachings, dress in a God-honoring way, find peace in how God has made you and your body, find security in His delight in you.

Recommended Starting Rhythm: Commit to better sleep habits (at least seven hours a night), get regular exercise, make healthier food choices, have open and honest conversations with close friends about your sexuality and how to be faithful in that area.

Pro Tip: Listen to your body and pay attention to how you feel. Create a healthy rhythm that is realistic for your season of life.

If you are new to this rhythm, start small. Go to bed earlier than usual. Avoid late-night scrolling on your phone or too much entertainment. Try going for a walk each day. Add your new practices to your *Rhythms of Life Plan*.



RELATIONSHIPS

For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

1 John 3:11

We are relational beings, created by a relational God, who are meant to be in relationships. However, in a cultural moment that values autonomy and individualism above all else, we are being trained to live in a relationally stunted way. With social media as a primary vehicle for relationships, we can inadvertently establish our value based on how many likes or followers we have. We can have a plethora of paper-thin relationships but not be truly known and loved. We can have many “friends” and yet lack any relationships of depth or substance.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to cultivate deep relationships with other Christ-followers. Just as Jesus prioritized living in a worshipful community with His disciples, we are to intentionally develop this with others in our Center Community. We are not just called to live in relationship with God (Up) as isolated individuals; we are called to create a strong experience of community (In) that leads to life and love for others (Out).

Jesus models relationships that are rich in invitation and also full of challenge. To have these types of relationships, we should seek to walk alongside other followers of Jesus and form relationships of trust and commitment. With Jesus at the center of our relationships, He will be the glue that binds us together and the source of selfless love needed to form these healthy, deep relationships.

REFLECTION

Take some time, reflect, and work through these questions to help you examine your relationships. You may find it helpful to think through the categories of friendship, family, church, and marriage (if applicable). Write them in your journal.

- How are you doing at forming strong, deep, and loving relationships?
- What is currently holding you back from strong relationships? (For example, being too busy, having a hard time trusting others, insecurity, selfishness with my time, etc.)
- How would Jesus challenge you to more intentionally pursue strong relationships? What do you think He would exhort you to do? To stop doing?
- Let's get practical. What are you going to start doing to create, nurture, and deepen relationships of vulnerability and accountability?
- What do you need to stop doing in order to have enough time to form deep relationships?
- What are some practical ways you can keep your relationships centered on Jesus? Family. Friendships. Center Community.
- Are you prioritizing your Center Community? We're not just talking about attending your group a couple times a month, but being relationally engaged in a meaningful way.

Examples: Free up your schedule of non-essential activities to create space to invest in deep relationships. Ask questions, be authentic, bring Jesus into the relationship through prayer and scripture, and challenge each other to become like Jesus. Eat together, have fun, and laugh together! When needed, cry together and comfort each other, lean into brokenness, and bear each other's burdens.

Recommended Starting Rhythm: Commit to a consistent meal with your Center Community Group (Weekly? Twice a month?). Develop some daily and weekly connection points with your closest relationships. Create a space to be genuinely open, ask deep questions and really get to know each other.

Pro Tip: Relationships of trust, love, and depth take time and investment, so play the long game. Don't wait until you feel like you have the time, start now!

You can start small by getting together with two or three friends and asking them to share their story and then share your story. Do something fun and laugh together, then make it a regular part of your life to be with them. Add these new practices to your *Rhythms of Life Plan*.

REST

*And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."
Exodus 33:14*

After He finished creation, God modeled rest on the seventh day. In fact, the very first day of Adam and Eve's existence was spent with God as He rested from His creation work. He has woven rest into the fabric of life, both the need for it and the blessing of it. We see Sabbath rest as a regular rhythm in Jesus' life, and yet we often choose to ignore our need for soul-nourishing rest. Instead, we prefer living overextended and over-committed lives that run us ragged. Sabbath rest is an essential component of living well in God's world. We will be less likely to give in to temptation if we are well-rested, healthy, and content in the Lord. More than that, when we are well-rested, love for others will flow more naturally from a renewed heart.

Since we live in a hectic, busy, and achievement-driven culture, we need to live with great intentionality in this area. We must choose to trust Jesus; while we are still, He is at work. As we do this, we are training ourselves to delight in the gift of rest and acknowledge that we are not in control, but King Jesus is. We also need to remember that there is a difference between refreshing rest spent with God and American style leisure. True Sabbath rest is spent enjoying God and His good gifts while focusing on Him, surrendering the preoccupation and stress about the to-do list. American style leisure is more of a selfish pursuit of earthly pleasures that we think we deserve. American style leisure often leaves you empty and spiritually malnourished, while true Sabbath rest refreshes you as you enjoy God and His creation in a worshipful way.

We all have to cut out some areas of over-commitment in order to create margin and follow Jesus' rhythm of Sabbath. This practice of resting in Jesus is a pathway to experience the abundant life He promises. All of us will have to actively fight against busyness and distracting media, and instead train ourselves to stop and rest. Protecting the commitment of rest will force us to say no to excessive entertainment, workaholicism, unimportant busywork, overcommitment, and the other activities we use to distract and numb ourselves. Sabbath rest is a weekly gift from the Lord. Receive it as the blessing that it is, and allow your body, mind, emotions, and heart to rest in the Lord!

REFLECTION

Take some time, reflect, and work through these questions to help you examine your patterns in this area. Write them in your journal.

- Are you tired? Are you worn out? What is keeping you from the type of rest that refreshes you down to the core of your being?
- What do you need to stop doing in order to create margin in your schedule to rest?
- Reflect on the differences between American style leisure (For example, watching something on the couch) and soul-nourishing rest (For example, setting your attention on God throughout an enjoyable activity). Which of those two do you most often do?
- Think about a couple areas of brokenness in your life and write them down. Reflect on how practicing Sabbath rest could bring renewal and transformation in those areas. How could God change you for the better through this type of soul-nourishing rest?
- This time will not happen by accident; it must be planned for and protected. How will you plan and schedule Sabbath rest into your weekly rhythm?

Examples: Daily morning quiet time, making time to enjoy a hobby and thanking God for the joy of that activity, listening to worship music while cooking a good meal, taking a nap, a fast from TV or news intake that day, taking an extended walk in nature, reading a book that deepens your love for God, sleeping seven hours most nights.

Recommended Starting Rhythm: Stay off of social media (or news channels) throughout your Sabbath rest so that you can avoid distractions or content that dulls your love for God.

Pro Tip: The ideal Sabbath rest is a protected 24-hour block of time (Dinner Saturday night to dinner on Sunday night), but start where you can. Better to have a protected block of time each week that you begin with rather than nothing at all. Start with a four hour block of time on Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon and build from there. Plan a Sabbath and then prepare ahead of time to make it restful (For example, plan an early bed time, clean the night before and listen to worship, meal prep). Do what is life-giving for you, and enjoy God while you do it! You will love Sabbath and look forward to it as you retrain yourself to spend your time in the most profitable way possible.

Add these new practices to your *Rhythms of Life Plan*.

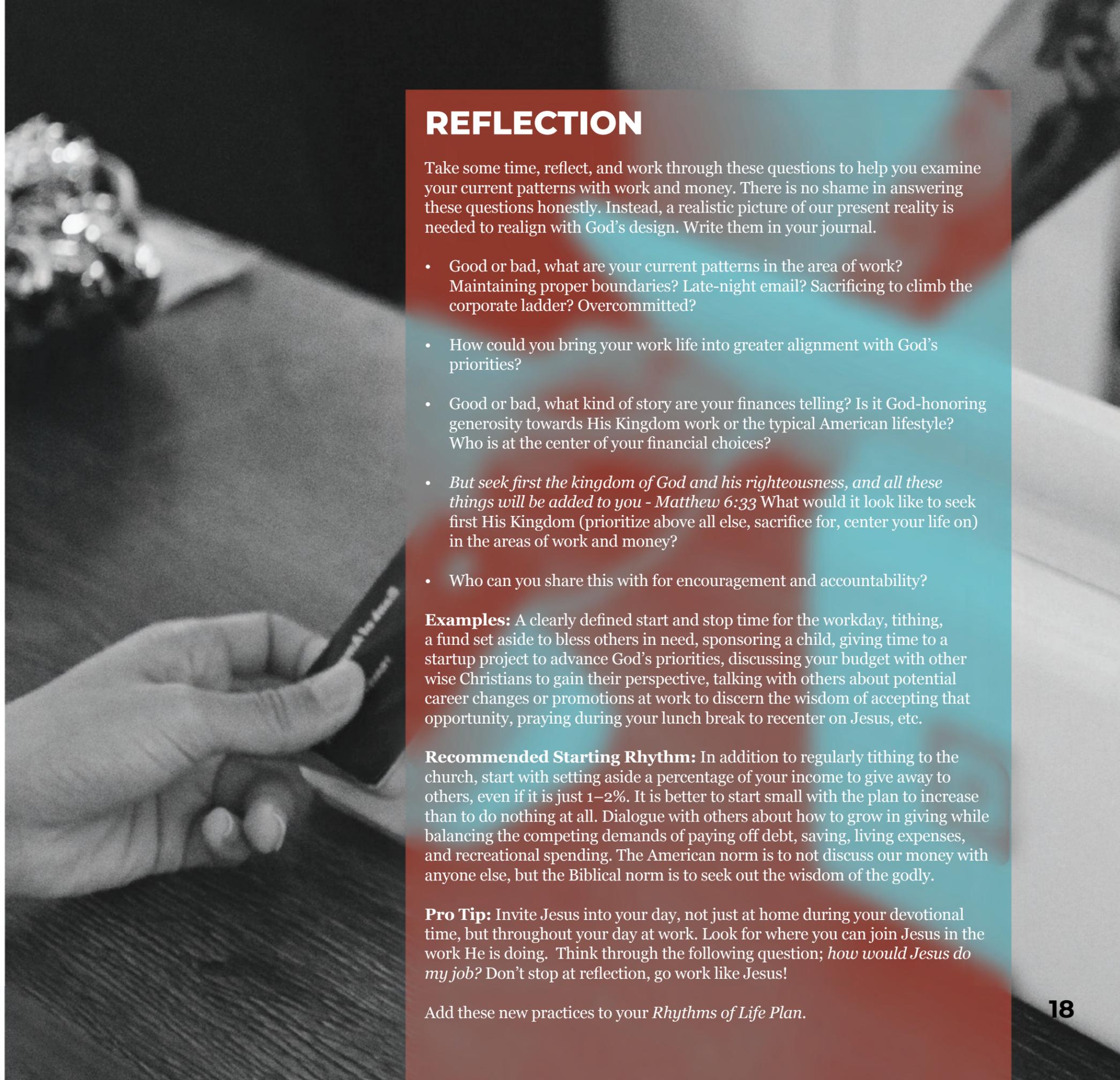
WORK & MONEY

*Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.
Colossians 3:23*

We see in Genesis 2 that when God created humans, He set them in the Garden to work in it and to cultivate it. God created us to work, and it is a part of what it means to be made in the image of God. Architecting our work life according to the priorities of Jesus is one of the practical ways we live with Him at the center of our lives. Through our work, we can benefit and bless those around us, bringing honor to God as a result. But if we're not intentional, our work lives can also bring great harm on those around us as well. This is an incredibly important area to focus on in the effort to realign with the priorities of Jesus. Our work is mainly given to pursue a career or to accomplish a current calling in our lives (For example, raising kids). In both cases, using our time, money, gifting, and capacity is a large part of becoming more like Jesus as we work and live in this world.

Our work often generates money; how we steward those resources is key to our apprenticeship to Jesus. A life of simplicity and generosity was modeled by Jesus and is key to life in His Kingdom. In our culture, materialism, love of money above all else, and workaholicism are celebrated. We must be aware of the fact that a love of money will inhibit our ability to be faithful to the Way of Jesus.

The average person will spend 90,000 hours, or roughly 1/3 of their life, working. What we do with that time and the resources we accrue is a massive opportunity for fruitful obedience to Jesus. Conversely, if we are not intentional with how we work and manage our money, we will be deformed into the image of our sinful world and experience the brokenness that sin always brings. We all have the opportunity to bring our work and money into alignment with the priorities of Jesus so that we are renewed, others are blessed, and God is honored above all.



REFLECTION

Take some time, reflect, and work through these questions to help you examine your current patterns with work and money. There is no shame in answering these questions honestly. Instead, a realistic picture of our present reality is needed to realign with God's design. Write them in your journal.

- Good or bad, what are your current patterns in the area of work? Maintaining proper boundaries? Late-night email? Sacrificing to climb the corporate ladder? Overcommitted?
- How could you bring your work life into greater alignment with God's priorities?
- Good or bad, what kind of story are your finances telling? Is it God-honoring generosity towards His Kingdom work or the typical American lifestyle? Who is at the center of your financial choices?
- *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you - Matthew 6:33* What would it look like to seek first His Kingdom (prioritize above all else, sacrifice for, center your life on) in the areas of work and money?
- Who can you share this with for encouragement and accountability?

Examples: A clearly defined start and stop time for the workday, tithing, a fund set aside to bless others in need, sponsoring a child, giving time to a startup project to advance God's priorities, discussing your budget with other wise Christians to gain their perspective, talking with others about potential career changes or promotions at work to discern the wisdom of accepting that opportunity, praying during your lunch break to recenter on Jesus, etc.

Recommended Starting Rhythm: In addition to regularly tithing to the church, start with setting aside a percentage of your income to give away to others, even if it is just 1–2%. It is better to start small with the plan to increase than to do nothing at all. Dialogue with others about how to grow in giving while balancing the competing demands of paying off debt, saving, living expenses, and recreational spending. The American norm is to not discuss our money with anyone else, but the Biblical norm is to seek out the wisdom of the godly.

Pro Tip: Invite Jesus into your day, not just at home during your devotional time, but throughout your day at work. Look for where you can join Jesus in the work He is doing. Think through the following question; *how would Jesus do my job?* Don't stop at reflection, go work like Jesus!

Add these new practices to your *Rhythms of Life Plan*.



GOSPEL & HOSPITALITY

*So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves because you had become very dear to us.
1 Thessalonians 2:8*

As followers of Jesus, we are all called to be a witness to the good news of Jesus. This good news isn't just some theoretical philosophy we're describing in the abstract, the gospel is to be shared with the entirety of our lives! Therefore, when we talk about Jesus with others, it should be with love and excitement that comes from a full heart from all that He has done for us. As you read the Gospels, you see that Jesus often had these good news conversations over a meal. He didn't just talk at people, He spent time with people. In fact, if you were to remove from the Gospels all the times Jesus was at someone's house or at a table sharing a meal, there would not be much content left!

Sharing the gospel is not about winning an argument or proving someone wrong, but more about lovingly leading a person to experience the reality of Jesus. Jesus regularly welcomed people from all walks of life to the table for a meal. There is a long-standing tradition from the Way of Jesus that sees hospitality not only as an expression of love but also as the best way to invite people to both hear and experience the gospel of God's love in action.

What if we became a church full of people who intentionally practiced hospitality in a way that led others to Jesus? What could God do among us if we opened up our homes and our lives to share the good news of Jesus? A non-negotiable commitment to following Jesus is inviting others to Him. Our discipleship isn't just for our benefit, it is to spill over for the benefit of others!

REFLECTION

Take some time, reflect, and work through these questions to help you examine your current rhythms with gospel and hospitality. Write them in your journal.

- Is your life set up in a way where you have the time, energy, and love to care for those far from God? Is there enough margin (emotionally, schedule, financial) to even do this?
- This is not just some theoretical idea we are called to consider; this practice is about Jesus' command to love people. People matter to Jesus, so people matter to us. What are the names of some people you know who need Christ?
- What is holding you back from inviting them into hospitality that shares the gospel?
- What do you need to stop doing in order to create margin in your schedule to practice hospitality with these people?
- What do you need to start doing in order to practice hospitality with those in need of Jesus?
- Jesus did not send His disciples out to do this on their own. None of us can do this in our own strength. Get together with your Center Community to pray and dream together how you all can share the gospel through the practice of hospitality.

Examples: Create a regular night in your schedule to host neighbors for dinner (First Friday of the month?), ask to hear their stories, and share yours. Do not rush by your coworkers, but instead ask the type of questions that give people a chance to open up. If you have kids in recreational activities, pray for God to open up relational doors with others. Instead of rushing home from practice, ask if other families want to meet up for a meal.

Recommended Starting Rhythm: Commit to inviting a friend who does not follow Jesus over for dinner once a month. Then, pray and consider how to invite them to your Center Community or Center Church.

Pro Tip: Running an Alpha group for a season with your Center Community is a great way to create space for intentional conversations. You will have the opportunity to invite friends and neighbors to join you for a shared meal and great Jesus-centered discussions, all while having the support of your Center Community. Email connect@centerchurch.live for more information on how to start an Alpha.

Add these new practices to your *Rhythms of Life Plan*.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Definitions and categories are taken from the works of Dallas Willard and Richard Foster.

Spiritual disciplines are “the various practices of Jesus that have been recognized for centuries as the core activities of the spiritual life. In the same way a runner is equipped to compete in a marathon by the discipline of physical training, so training through spiritual disciplines frees us to live each day with the “easy yoke” and “light burden” Jesus spoke of in Matthew 11:30.

Spiritual Disciplines do not earn us favor with God or measure spiritual success. They are exercises which equip us to live fully and freely in the present reality of God — and God works with us, giving us grace as we learn and grow.”³

There are two categories that are important to think about when we consider Spiritual Disciplines. **Disciplines of Abstinence**, are choosing to go without something that we desire or need in order to heighten our focus on God (For example, fasting from food⁴, fasting from sex⁵, silence, solitude, etc.). These disciplines are sometimes done in order to address patterns that are destructive or unhelpful (learning to overcome an addiction), in other cases we abstain from a legitimate good in order to deepen our dependence on God and grow in our desire for Him. **Disciplines of Engagement** are practices designed to build the right kinds of attitudes and habits into our daily lives. These disciplines were modeled by Jesus as the way to live in His Kingdom and He calls all His followers to also practice them (For example, prayer, scripture, gathered worship, living in community). As we engage in these disciplines over the long haul, the Holy Spirit will renew and transform us.

While there are many other good Spiritual Disciplines to practice, the following list are ones we think are especially needed for our context of following Jesus in our place and time. This list is not exhaustive, just a running start! As core practices to following Jesus, several of these Spiritual Disciplines are likely to appear several times in your *Rhythms of Life Plan* (For example silence & solitude may be essential to both Abiding and Mind). Include these disciplines wherever they make the most sense in your day to day life .

³ Renovare.org on Spiritual Disciplines

⁴ Matthew 6:16-18

⁵ 1 Corinthians 7:3-5

SILENCE & SOLITUDE

Withdrawing from the noise and distractions of life in order to attentively listen to God in a time of quiet.

SCRIPTURE

Reading God’s self-revelation for the sake of knowing Him and how to live in His Ways.

PRAYER

An interactive conversation with God about your life, the world, and His priorities.

FASTING

The voluntary denial of a legitimate good (food, entertainment, etc.) for the sake of deeper spiritual activity.

SIMPLICITY

Structuring your life in such a way that it becomes more freeing and creates space in your schedules, homes, and finances for what really matters.

SABBATH REST

A protected time set aside to be with God, rest, and enjoy soul-nourishing activities.

LIVING IN COMMUNITY

Christ-centered friendships that are enriching and supportive. These are people you are choosing to follow Jesus with throughout your week, not just when you are at Center Church.

GATHERED WORSHIP

Gathering at Center Church to connect with God and others. This is the time to build each other up, be shaped by the Word, and celebrate together how good He is!

To see an example of how these disciplines can be practiced, see the sample *Rhythms of Life Plan* on the next page.

RHYTHMS OF LIFE

UP

IN

OUT

GOSPEL & HOSPITALITY

WORK & MONEY

REST

RELATIONSHIPS

BODY

MIND

ABIDE

PRAY ALOUD BEFORE & AFTER BED

SIN DOES NOT DEFINE ME GOD DEFINES ME

7-8 HOURS OF SLEEP EVERY NIGHT.

JOURNAL TO GOD / WRITE HIM A WEEKLY RECAP LETTER.

GO ON A WALK OR HIKE w/ GOD.

INTRODUCE MYSELF TO SOMEONE NEW

EMBRACE THE SABBATH.

GET COFFEE w/ A SMALL GROUP MEMBER.

SERVE IN THE CHURCH

|

REUSE MONTHLY BUDGET

HOST AN EVENT

FAST 8-12 HOURS

MEMORIZE 4 VERSES OF SCRIPTURE

VOLUNTEER MY DAY / WEEKEND TO A CHARITY

DONATE TO A CHARITY.

WEEKEND RETREAT

30 DAY CHALLENGE

5-7 DAY VACATION

DAILY

WEEKLY

MONTHLY

QUARTERLY

ANNUALLY

GOSPEL & HOSPITALITY

WORK & MONEY

REST

RELATIONSHIPS

BODY

MIND

ABIDE

OUT

IN

UP

RHYTHMS OF LIFE

DAILY

WEEKLY

MONTHLY

QUARTERLY

ANNUALLY

**WE HAVE BEEN GREATLY
INFLUENCED BY THE WORK
OF SO MANY THAT HAVE GONE
BEFORE US. FOR THE STRUCTURE
AND MATERIALS IN THIS GUIDE,
WE ARE ESPECIALLY INDEBTED
TO THE FOLLOWING MINISTRIES:**

**3DM
DALLAS WILLARD
PRACTICING THE WAY
RENOVARE INSTITUTE
SATURATE**

***VERSES ARE FROM THE
ESV TRANSLATION UNLESS
OTHERWISE NOTED.**

