

BRICK **BY** **BRICK**

Building an Unshakeable Faith

Discipleship Training



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1. Growing Authentic Disciples is a Priority

Growing Authentic Disciples – or, more usefully, apprentices to Jesus – is one of the strategic priorities of the church, as it reflects our primary calling as Christians.

This handbook incorporates a lot of the most contemporary thinking in the execution of that most long-standing Christian desire:

to practise the way of Jesus.

It is designed to be a resource that all can use as they examine their own Spiritual discipline and seek to change their practices and habits to become more like the person God designed them to be.

It is intended to prove helpful to individuals, and also to groups of various sizes.

The deep, fundamental transformation that each one of us needs in order to authentically live out the Kingdom of God (see Appendix 1) is not to be found through merely:

- **Reading the Bible** – although Matthew Chapters 5-7 (Sermon on the Mount – see Appendix 2) presents Jesus' blueprint for how we should live, and New Testament letters (such as those from Paul, Peter, John or James) help us understand the practical outworking of that blueprint. We cannot think our way to Christ-likeness: we are not just 'Brains on legs' – we are shaped by our loves and longings.

*"Information transfer alone does not yield transformation."*¹

- **Going on a course** – although there are some really helpful courses, such as 'Freedom In Christ'⁶ that can start to liberate us
- **Being zapped by the Holy Spirit** – although we will not be transformed without His presence in our lives. We need to partner with God in our transformation, not leave it all up to Him.

*"Spiritual maturity does not equate to just freedom or healing."*⁷

To become authentic disciples, we need to practise the way of Jesus – a process that takes a lifetime to complete.

St Paul said this about himself

Rom 7:18-23 NIV) :

¹⁸ For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹ for I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. ²⁰ now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

²¹ So I find this law at work: although I want to do good, evil is right there with me.²² for in my inner being I delight in God's law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me."

So, how can we access the deep, fundamental transformation that each one of us needs in order to authentically live out the Kingdom of God?

2. The Spiritual Transformation – Mission Cycle

Discipleship follows a cycle of Personal Spiritual Transformation and Mission.

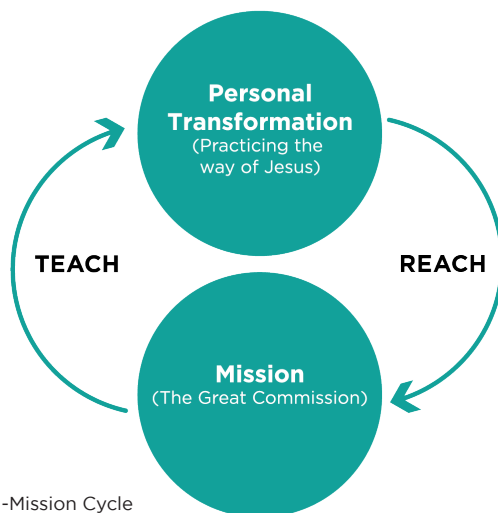


Figure 1:
The Transformation-Mission Cycle

The starting point is for us to practise the way of Jesus, transforming our personal spiritual lives to become more like Him. Then, at points in our personal life-long transformation, we will reach out to our community, following the Great Commission.

We seek to spread Jesus' offer, through teaching the truth of the Gospels and particularly the blueprint of the Sermon on the Mount, to seekers in the community we serve.

Living out the guidance in the New Testament, we would seek to illuminate their own need for transformation: to start to practise the way of Jesus.

***“God is the God of feasts and festivals, who calls His people to draw aside for times of renewal and reflection. But...growth and maturity in the Christian faith (and life) are supposed to be a daily ongoing series of steps, developed in the midst of the ordinary stuff of life,”*”**

This handbook focuses on the Personal Transformation part of the cycle.

“Don’t copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”

(Romans 12:2 NLT)

3. How Can I Become an Authentic Disciple of Jesus?

We are what we want. Our wants and longings and desires are at the core of our identity, the wellspring from which our actions and behaviour flow. Our wants reverberate from our heart, the epicentre of the human person.

Thus Scripture counsels: **“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it”** (Proverbs 4:23 NIV).

Discipleship, we might say, is a way to curate your heart, to be attentive to, and intentional about, what you love. Discipleship is more a matter of hungering and thirsting than of knowing and believing. Jesus’ command to follow Him is a command to align our loves and longings with His – to want what God wants, to desire what God desires, to hunger and thirst after God and crave a world where He is all in all – a vision encapsulated by the shorthand ‘The Kingdom of God’”⁴ (see Appendix 1)

“Humans tend to live themselves into new ways of thinking, more than think themselves into new ways of living.”

(St Francis of Assisi)

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

(Proverbs 4:23 NIV)

**Becoming an authentic disciple of Jesus is a 3-step process.^{1, 2}
It is the way Jesus taught his disciples.**

1. Spend time with Jesus

“Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach”

(Mark 3:13-14 NIV)

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”

(John 15:1-4 NIV)

2. Become more like Jesus

The point of apprenticeship is to become like your rabbi.

“He also told them this parable: “Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into a pit? The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.

(Luke 6:39-40 NIV)

3. Do what Jesus did

Imitate – Practise, Practise, Practise – Develop a new nature

“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.”

(Matthew 14:28-29 NIV)

Unintentional Spiritual Formation

Just by waking up and drawing breath each day, we start to be formed into something: it’s a human thing. But who or what are we being transformed into? Unintentionally, we follow a trajectory that may be taking us further from what God made us to be; we feel the inertia of life. We are allowing ourselves to be distracted into spiritual oblivion.¹⁰

We may want to change, we may be trying really hard to change, but how can we change?

We are formed by: the stories we believe, our habits, our relationships and our environment.

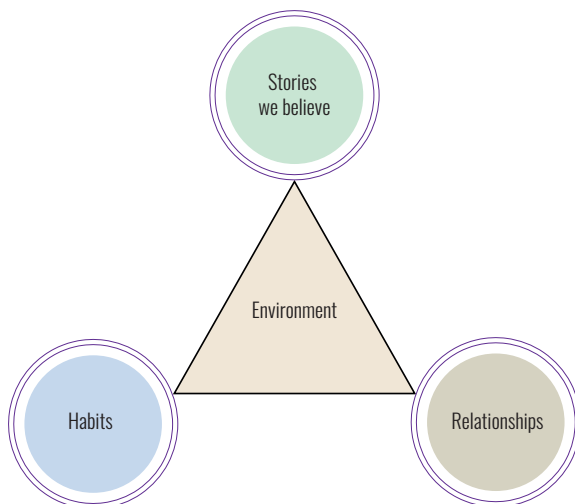


Figure 2: Unintentional Spiritual Formation

4. What is Spiritual Formation?

“Spiritual formation in the Christian tradition is a process of increasingly being possessed and permeated by the character traits of Jesus as we walk in the easy yoke of discipleship with Jesus our teacher.”³

Transformation comes out of the place of apprenticeship to Jesus.

Transformation is not to make us a Christian clone, but rather to set us free to become the special person that God made us to be.

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit”

(2 Corinthians 3:17-18 NIV)

**Stories
we Believe**

**Christian
Teaching**

Is transformation possible? Yes, but it’s not inevitable. It takes effort and application on a daily basis, even just to counteract the reverse pull of the world’s stories, habits, relationships and the environment we live in (Figure 2). We are looking at a radical overhaul at our DNA level.

Unintentionally, we follow a trajectory that may be taking us further from what God made us to be; we feel the inertia of life.

We are allowing ourselves to be distracted into spiritual oblivion.¹⁰

As a start to our character transformation, we need to substitute sound Christian teaching for the world-view we have, the stories we believe:

“The stories we live in are the stories we live out.”²

Our Beliefs are the settled view of what we hold to be true.

The stories we live in.

Our Behaviours are our beliefs in action.

For example if we believe in gravity, we will expect to settle on that chair, rather than float away.

Stories are things we have been told about ourselves that we believe, which stop us becoming more like the way God intended.

They can be:

- Negative criticisms that limit our ambitions,
- Overwhelmingly positive statements that lure us down a particular way without examination, or
- Things I've told myself that may not be true.

We may have the view that: *"I'm just an anxious person and I'll always be a worrier."* or *"Someone said that because I have red hair, I will always be an angry person"*.

The postmodern world we live in believes there are no absolute truths, that anything and everything is OK. The world of 'Just do it!', 'YOLO (You Only Live Once)', where we are just the product of time and chance, and being happy is the best we can ask for. There is no belief in moral knowledge or values. But does that story make the most sense of our felt experiences?

"I respect your need for a faith to act out, but it's not for me."

"The best that western civilization can offer is escape" ¹



Something is warped out of shape in our humanity. We tend to blame-shift all the problems in the world onto somebody else, or something external, because we do not believe in original sin. There is a gap between who we are, and who we want to be. But we can renew our mind and, in so doing, start to think God's thoughts.

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will."

(Romans 12:2 NIV)

God is real, God is stable and God is able ⁶. We can build our lives around Him, we can base our values on His and we can know that He is who He says He is. In His very statement that He is Yahweh - "I Am Who I Am" - we know He will be with us in every difficulty and meet every one of our needs.

Next, we need to replace the habits we have fallen into with practices that bring us closer to Jesus, to intentionally partner with God to curate the loves and longings of our heart - we are not 'brains on legs'.

(See Appendix 4 for examples of practices we could follow)

*"What we do on a regular basis, we become.
The things we do, do something to us" ¹*

**Our daily practices, or habits, shape our loves and our longings – our hearts.
We do not realise the power of habit.**

Develop a new rhythm – a new way of living our life. Exercise our 'muscle' of will-power – and it's not about just **trying** very hard, but rather **training** very hard.

"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. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

(Matthew 11:28-30 MSG)

Change our Spiritual disciplines / practices, perhaps adopt a new routine, such as planning to:

- 1. Honour hourly** – e.g praise God at the top of each hour
- 2. Divert daily** – e.g. set aside 15 minutes each morning to read your Bible and pray before you enter the world
- 3. Withdraw weekly** – e.g. choose one day each week to live life more open to the Holy Spirit (keep the Sabbath)
- 4. Abandon annually** – e.g. take a week or two away from home and its calls and routines

Try taking a spiritual audit – a log of everything we do during a week, and look at what habits we could start to swap for more spiritual practices. Start with one or two things and progress from there over time.

For example, try turning off the ringer on our mobile and checking for messages when it is right for us to do so – make the phone our servant rather than our master.

The relationships we have may not always help us, and we need to become more deeply a part of the community of believers:



"Too long we've been living these unexamined lives" ⁵

We become like the people we hang out with on a regular basis. This can be either a good or a bad thing, depending on whom we are in relationship with. Choose to be with other followers of Jesus in our neighbourhood, whom we make a decision to follow Jesus alongside.

We cannot follow Jesus alone: remember Jesus had **disciples**, plural. We need people to offer us both exposure and encouragement. Otherwise, we can become blind to what we're really like. We need people around us who will help us find out where we need to change and give us encouragement on that journey – people who will follow Jesus with us, together.

Living Behind Masks

A mask is a protective barrier we construct; it's something we wear, to stop people seeing what we're really like. It's a layer that protects us, but it can hinder relationships. We can only lay down our masks when we fully trust those around us. This is more likely to happen within a small, stable group of friends who are contending for our Spiritual growth.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”
(Hebrews 10:24-25 NIV)

All of this happens within an environment - the one we live in.



Our country, our family, the internet - together they become a very effective 'formation machine', which has a clear idea of what kind of person it wants us to grow into. The longer we remain in a place or an environment, the more we will become like it. We love people who are just like us!

Our environment is the Holy Spirit – It's a partnership with God.

“Without God we can't, but without us, God won't”
(St Augustine)

We have to invest our time and effort in order to change, but God does the heavy lifting.

We need to learn to be in two places at once – where we are, and also in the presence of the Holy Spirit

Our experiences shape and form us. Our transformation will happen over time, through the hard knocks of life and will take a lifetime.

Above all, we cannot counteract the negative aspects of our environment without seeking to immerse ourselves in the loving embrace of our Counsellor, the Holy Spirit.

The first and primary goal of apprenticeship to Jesus is learning to live in a constant state of awareness of and connection to the Holy Spirit. This comes down to learning to always be in two places at once.

There is a lot more on how to develop the practice of the presence of God in the next section.

So it will take some effort. Our apprenticeship to Jesus has to overcome all four of these aspects of spiritual formation – the stories we believe, the habits or practices we adopt, the relationships we choose, and the environment we place ourselves in. ¹

But, the good news is – with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can be transformed!

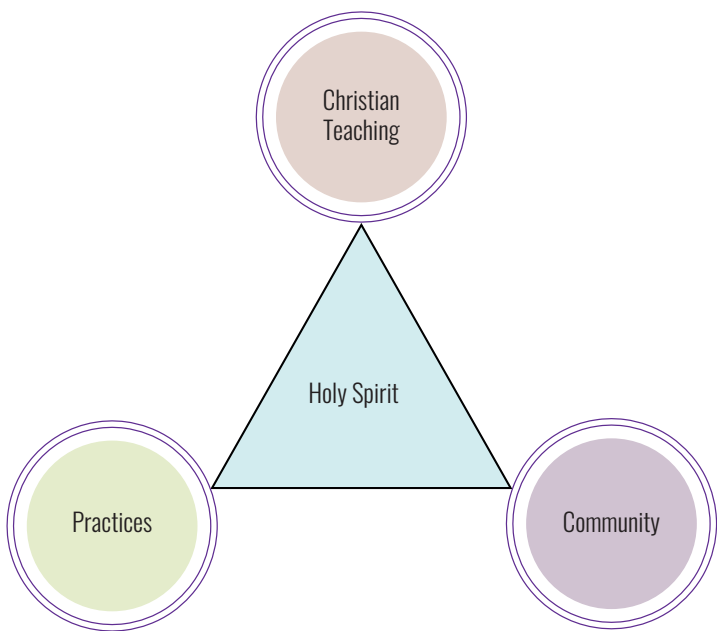


Figure 3: Intentional Spiritual Formation

5. How do I Develop the Practice of the Presence of God?

“The first and most basic thing we can do and must do is to keep God before our minds... This is the fundamental secret of caring for our souls. Our part in thus practising the presence of God is to direct and redirect our minds constantly to Him. In the early time of our ‘practising’ we may well be challenged by our burdensome habits of dwelling on things less than God. But these are habits – not the law of gravity – and can be broken. A new, grace-filled habit will replace the former ones as we take intentional steps toward keeping God before us. Soon our minds will return to God as the needle of a compass constantly returns to the north. If God is the great longing of our souls, He will become the pole star of our inward beings.”³

There is a gap between what we know in our head, and what we want to do in our heart. And there is another gap between wanting to do, and doing it with our body. What we love in our heart has a far greater effect on how we live than what we know in our head.

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

(Proverbs 4:23 NIV)

We change what we love through practice – what we do in our habits is what we become: the things we do, do something to us.

The first and primary goal of apprenticeship to Jesus is learning to live in a constant state of awareness of, and connection to, the Holy Spirit.

Transformation comes out of a place of relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To develop the practice of the presence of God, we need to develop the spiritual disciplines (i.e. the practices of Jesus) so that we can be with Jesus and become more like Him.

“The spiritual disciplines are practices based on the lifestyle of Jesus that create time and space for us to access the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and in doing so, be transformed from the inside out.”¹

Examples of helpful spiritual disciplines, or practices of Jesus are:

- **Silence & solitude** (see Section 6)
- **Prayer**
- **Fasting**
- **Simplicity**
- **Bible reading**
- **Living in community with other believers** (church)
- **Keeping the Sabbath** (set aside for rest and worship – Section 7)

These practices of mind and body are our part in the partnership with God to transform us. A discipline is a way to access power and is a means to an end – to be with Jesus.

“If we want to experience the life of Jesus we have to adopt the lifestyle of Jesus.”¹

Let us walk a life worthy of our family name:

“I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.”

(Ephesians 4:1 NIV)

“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

(Ephesians 4:22-24 NIV)

We have to acknowledge that our muscle of will-power is a finite resource. Developing the spiritual disciplines therefore takes time and requires smart training.

Smart training:

- **takes into account the need for repetition**
- **takes a balanced approach**
- **takes into account your personality**
(tap into what makes you come alive – see the pathways below)
- **takes into account your season of life**
- **takes into account the need of the hour**
(needs of both commission and omission)
- **isn't afraid to do the hard work** (follow the pain!)

There are nine pathways to seek God⁹, and depending on the predominant character that God has given you, one may be the most suitable for you. They are:

1. **Naturalists:** loving God out of doors
2. **Sensates:** loving God with the senses
3. **Traditionalists:** loving God through ritual and symbol
4. **Ascetics:** loving God in solitude and simplicity
5. **Activists:** loving God through confrontation
6. **Caregivers:** loving God by loving others
7. **Enthusiasts:** loving God with mystery and celebration
8. **Contemplatives:** loving God through adoration
9. **Intellectuals:** loving God with the mind

There is likely to be an individual pathway, or perhaps a combination, that you will find most useful in seeking the presence of God. That will be the pathway that God has given you to use in deepening your relationship with Him.

Figure 4 below is an attempt at a graphical representation of the space within which you will find it most powerful to seek God.¹

For example, if your predominant character is introvert, then you will encounter God more easily through the left practices (e.g. silence and solitude). If you are extrovert, the practices bottom right are examples of where you may find God more easily. Note that practising in the opposite quadrant to your ‘comfort zone’ may be a necessary step on your walk with Jesus.

If your area of conflict is through sins of commission (e.g. gluttony) then abstinence may be the area that you need to practise more, whereas if they are sins of omission (e.g. difficulty in meeting with other people) then practising more engagement may bring you closer to God.

There is no quick fix. Whatever your pathway, it will take you a lifetime to complete!

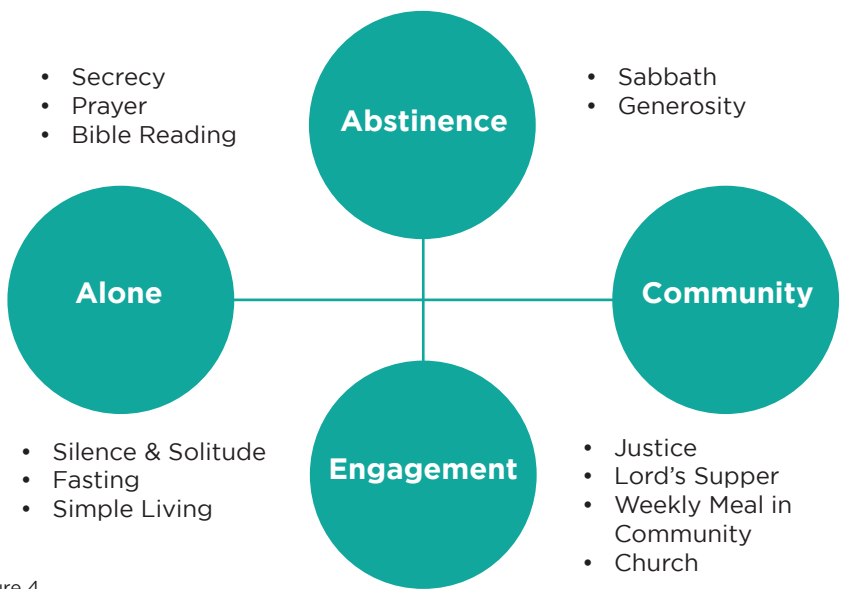


Figure 4

6. The Practice of Silence and Solitude

It has been said that: “We are distracting ourselves into spiritual oblivion”¹⁰. We live in continuous partial attention and are driven by distraction and addiction to things that the world has created for us to focus on e.g. smart-phone apps, social media. In this so-called ‘attention economy’ our attention span is getting shorter and we are robbing ourselves of the ability to be truly present. We have lost those tiny fragments of time that could be portals into God’s presence.

The practice of ‘Silence and Solitude’ is to intentionally claim time to be quiet – to be alone with ourselves and God. Jesus practised this extensively, as a template for us to follow. Withdrawing to the ‘eremos’ - the solitary place, wilderness, deserted place, lonely place - was a big part of His life.

“Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”

(Luke 5:15 NIV)

It allowed Him to re-centre on His identity and calling, and we need to do the same. The ‘eremos’ was His place of strength. In Mark 1, Jesus withdrew to the ‘eremos’ to do battle with Satan, where He knew that, after being alone and fasting, He would be at the peak of His powers.

He instructed His disciples to be quiet and rest, rather than do anything.

“The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest. So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.”

(Mark 6:30-32 NIV)

For true silence, we need to quieten both externally and internally. In our western culture, we over-value talking and under-value silence. To obtain **external** silence may take some planning and action on our behalf, but is inherently easier than achieving **internal** silence. In the latter we may find emotions that are difficult to manage, but we should not run away from them, but rather meet with God in them.

To obtain solitude, it is obvious that we need to be alone. In solitude we hear the voice of our Father – we come home to ourselves and to God.

Think in terms of short and long periods of solitude. For example, practise solitude in four time zones: honour hourly, divert daily, withdraw weekly, abandon annually. But also grab every opportunity to be alone even for just an instant,

perhaps waiting in the check-out queue or at the traffic lights, or even when refueling the car. These are times when we can touch base with God.

It is a good practice to start each day with a silent prayer, such as the one that John Stott used:

Good morning Heavenly Father,
Good morning Lord Jesus,
Good morning Holy Spirit.

Father I worship you as the Creator
and sustainer of the universe.

Lord Jesus I worship you
as Lord and Saviour of this world.

Holy Spirit I worship you as the sanctifier
of the people of God.

Glory to the Father and the Son
and the Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father I pray that today I might
walk in your presence and please you
more & more.

Lord Jesus I pray that today I might take
up my cross and follow you.

Holy Spirit I pray that you might fill me
today with your presence and cause your
fruit to ripen within me: love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
self-control.

Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity; three
persons in one God,
have mercy on me.

Amen

7. The Practice of Keeping the Sabbath

In the world at large, and within the church, 'workaholic' is 'OK', 'busy' means 'I matter'. Nowadays, we carry our office in our back pocket, and we fill what's left of our lives with play. None of this, in moderation, is wrong, but it gives us little time to spend with God. If Satan can't make us sin, he's happy just to make us busy – either route has the capacity to cut us off from the presence of God and from ourselves.

The practice of keeping the Sabbath features right at the beginning of the Bible:

"Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work."

(Genesis 2:1-2 NIV)

God rested.

The Sabbath, in Hebrew, translates: to rest, to cease, to be done, and also has the connotation of to celebrate. Jesus carried out the majority of his healings on the Sabbath – it is a day for healing. It is therefore a time for rest, for worship and for healing.

In our 7-day culture, we have lost the capacity to celebrate, to delight in God's world. God blessed the 7th day and made it holy. He also built it into the cycle of creation. The Sabbath is our personal invitation to mimic His cycle: without it, we fight the natural rhythm of the cosmos.

Work wears our energy down – rest gives us our life back.

"Each morning everyone gathered as much (manna) as they needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away. On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much—two omers for each person—and the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses. He said to them, "This is what the Lord commanded: 'Tomorrow is to be a day of sabbath rest, a holy sabbath to the Lord. So bake what you want to bake and boil what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and keep it until morning.'"

(Exo 16:9-30 NIV)

God made time holy – not a space or a temple, but a day. The Sabbaths are our great cathedrals - God's architecture in time.

A holy Sabbath dedicated to the Lord for rest and worship - it is not a day off, dedicated to the maintenance of life.

It is both a command, and a gift. There is no right way to Sabbath, but however carried out, it allows us to feel our soul come alive again.

8. What does Effective, Authentic Discipleship Look Like?

Effective and authentic discipleship has a finger-print.²

Wise words on Disciples

"A disciple is an active, intentional learner. A disciple is an apprentice and a practitioner – not just a student of the word but a doer of it. A disciple is accountable to someone who knows them and helps them to learn and grow and live. A disciple is outwardly orientated, focused on helping others learn what it means to be a disciple."

(Mark Greene 'Imagine How We Can Reach The UK')

Changing Through Spending Time with People

We become like those whom we spend our lives with, and that's true of our relationship with Jesus.

"¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."

(2 Cor 3:18 NIV).

"⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵ 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. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."

(John 15:4,5,7 NIV)

- 1. Discipleship has a shape** (A descent: letting go of our sinful nature – followed by an ascent: taking on a new nature. Phil 2)
- 2. Discipleship has a soil** (Wed yourself to the well-being of one-another – be your brother's keeper. Your becoming more Christ-like is also the responsibility of the others you surround yourself with. Celebrate the success of others, rather than drag them down.)
- 3. Discipleship has a setting** (Recognise 4 settings of relationship, and a need to belong in all 4 spheres: crowd, social, personal, intimate – Figure 5 below)
- 4. Discipleship has a structure** (Where we think intentionally about how we move more effectively in the public, social, personal and intimate spaces – see below – so that we can become more like Christ.)

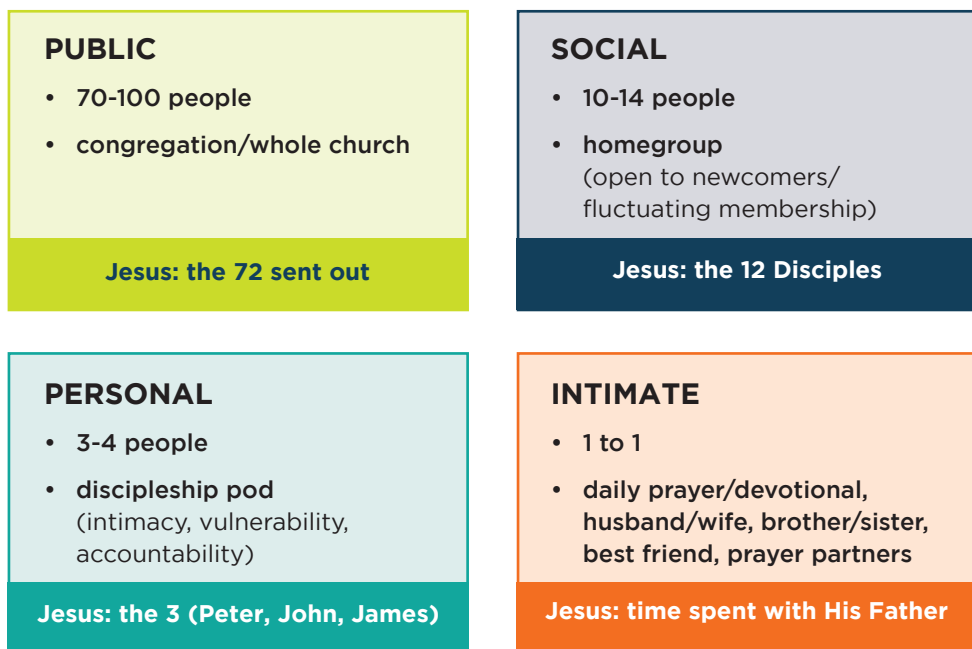


Figure 5: The Four Settings Of Relationship

Effective, authentic discipleship needs to take place across all four relationship settings.

9. How Will I Know I've Changed?

One way that you will see your character change will be through a more powerful demonstration of the fruit of the Spirit

(Galatians 5:22-23 NIV):

love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control

"So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."

(Galatians 5:16-25 NIV)

As we follow Jesus, we are also called to be salt and light in the world:

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

(Matthew 5:13-16 NIV)

If a seasoning has no flavour, it has no value. If we make no effort to affect the world around us, we are of little value to God. If we are too much like the world, we are worthless – Christians should not blend in with everyone else, instead, we should affect others positively and distinctively.

We are called to shine God's light in the world. We can hide our light by:

- being quiet when we should speak
- going along with the crowd
- denying the light
- letting sin dim our light
- not explaining our light to others when asked
- ignoring the needs of others.

Can you detect that you have changed – that you now shine your light as a beacon of truth in this dark world?

APPENDIX 1: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

What is the Kingdom of God?

The Kingdom of God refers to God's reign on earth and consequently, in our hearts.

By Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus meant a particular level of human consciousness, not a place to which Christians are destined after death.

"Jesus' command to follow him is a command to align our loves and longings with his – to want what God wants, to desire what God desires, to hunger and thirst after God and crave a world where he is all in all – a vision encapsulated by the shorthand 'the Kingdom of God.'"
(Dallas Willard)

How can I become part of the Kingdom?

- Sermon on the Mount – the blueprint
- St Paul's letters – practical out-working
- Other NT scripture – Peter, John, James

We need to Surrender – what does that mean?

- *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship."*
(Romans 12:1 NIV)
- *"Then he said to them all: whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."*
(Luke 9:23 NIV)

Surrendering is not submitting

- A horse surrenders its power and autonomy to the service of the rider
- We give ourselves to the service of God in order to achieve what we were made to be
- We daily surrender our plans and our identity
- It brings us to dependence on God
- It is strengthened in community
- It prepares us for courageous action: "God doesn't steer parked cars"

APPENDIX 2: THE GOAL

Sermon On The Mount

– Matthew's Gospel Chapters 5, 6 and 7 NIV

"Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and He began to teach them."

3"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

("blessed" – the fortunate state of being in God's kingdom "poor in spirit" – opposite of spiritual pride: aware of needing support from other people.)

4"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

("mourn" – aware of personal and the world's brokenness and need for compassion.)

5"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

("meek" – gentle, considerate, understanding : opposite of arrogant and self-seeking.)

6"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

("hunger & thirst" – for a right relationship with God: deeply dissatisfied with how we are.)

7"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."

("merciful" – don't give people what they deserve: forgive.)

⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

(“pure in heart” – take off our masks: show our real hearts.)

⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (“peacemaker” – bring blessing to others lacking inner peace: become like Jesus: eschew conflict.)

¹⁰“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

(“persecuted for righteousness” – be counter-cultural in seeking Jesus and God’s Kingdom)

Murder

²¹“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgement.’ ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgement.”

Adultery

²⁷“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Also:

Divorce (5:31-32)

Oaths (5:33-37)

Eye for Eye (5:38-42)

Love for Enemies (5:43-48)

Giving to the Needy (6:1-4)

Prayer (6:5-8) &

Lord’s Prayer (6:9-15)

Fasting (6:16-18)

Treasures in Heaven (6:19-24)

Do Not Worry (6:25-34)

Judging Others (7:1-6)

Ask, Seek, Knock (7:7-12)

The Narrow & Wide Gates (7:13-14)

True and False Prophets (7:15-20)

True and False Disciples (7:21-23)

The Wise & Foolish Builders (7:24-27)

²⁸ *When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹ because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.”*

APPENDIX 2: THE PROBLEM

St Paul said this about himself:

(Romans 7:18-23 NIV)

¹⁸*For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. ¹⁹for I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing. ²⁰now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.*

²¹*So I find this law at work: although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²²for in my inner being I delight in God’s law; ² but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.”*

APPENDIX 2: THE SOLUTION

So, how can we access the deep, fundamental transformation that each one of us needs in order to authentically live out the Kingdom of God?

“Humans tend to live themselves into new ways of thinking, more than think themselves into new ways of living.”

(St Francis of Assisi)

“Discipleship, we might say, is a way to curate your heart, to be attentive to and intentional about what you love. It’s more a matter of hungering and thirsting than of knowing and believing. Jesus’ command to follow Him is a command to align our loves and longings with His.”

(Prof Jamie K Smith)

"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."
(Proverbs 4:23 NIV)

APPENDIX 3: THE STORIES WE LIVE UNDER

Helpful Scripture replacing stories we live under (NIV Translation):

Worry:	Matt 6:25-34, Phil 4:6-7, Ps 46:1
Anger:	Matt 5:43-44, Prov 15:1, Eph 4:26, Prov 19:11
Inadequacy:	Matt 5:5, 1Cor 7:7, Rom 12:6-8 , 1Tim 4:4
Being different:	Rom 12:2, John 8:34-36, Prov 14:12, 1Cor 15:33
Doubting:	Mark 9:17-24, John 20:24-31, John 4:50
Conscious of sin:	1 John 1:5-10, Rom 6:23, Ps 25:4-11
Coping with failure:	Heb 4:14-16, Ps 73:26
Coping with death:	1 Thess 4:13-18, Rom 8:38-39, John 3:15-16
Jealousy:	1 Tim 6:6-10, Matt 6:33, 1John 2:15-17, Gal 5:22-26, Jam 3:13-16

See also the introduction to the Gideons 'New Testament and Psalms'

APPENDIX 4: THE HABITS WE ADOPT

How can we change our habits?

"The first and most basic thing we can do and must do is to keep God before our minds... this is the fundamental secret of caring for our souls. Our part in thus practising the presence of God is to direct and redirect our minds constantly to him"
(Dallas Willard)

"We need to intentionally partner with God to curate the loves and longings of our heart"
(Jamie K Smith)

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."
(Proverbs 4:23 NIV)

We need to learn to be able to be in two places at once – where we are, and also in the presence of the Holy Spirit – and develop a new way of being. Examples of how we could change:

- Adopt a new rhythm to our life
- Minimise phone distraction
- Embrace occasional boredom
- Seek silence and solitude
- Keep the Sabbath
- Adopt prayer and fasting

How can we prepare to change?

Try taking a spiritual audit – a log of everything we do during a week.

Look at what habits we could start to swap for more spiritual practices, or what we might attach to an existing habit.

Start with one or two things and progress from there over time.

Silence and Solitude:

Silence is both **outward** silence – indoors, outdoors, wherever is quiet. And **inner** silence – empty our mind of practical issues, things we need to do. Solitude is just somewhere we can be alone with our thoughts.

The Purpose is to be able to hear what God has to say to us, through the Holy Spirit.

Keeping The Sabbath:

Keep a day for rest, worship and healing. A special day, blessed by God and modelled by Him

“By the seventh day, God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it Holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that He had done”

(Genesis 2:2-3 NIV)

So God created a day which was holy, set apart. If we keep the Sabbath, we will be able to enjoy God's blessings, rejuvenate our body and restore our soul.

Practice Prayer and Fasting:

Fasting is intentionally giving something up, in order to trigger a more powerful focus on God (traditionally giving up eating for a period). It could also be giving up time, sleep or comfort (for example - the Anglican tradition of Lent, preparing for Easter.)

The purpose is to tap into spiritual power for our prayers and actions

The Bible gives examples, such as:

Jesus in the wilderness

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry....”

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit,...”

(Luke 4:1-2, 14 NIV)

His Disciples unable to drive out demons

“Jesus replied, ‘This kind can come out only by prayer and fasting’”

(Mark 9:29 NIV)

His apostles choosing missionaries

“While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.’”

(Acts 13:2-3 NIV)

APPENDIX 5: SOURCES AND REFERENCES

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