

THE SIX PRACTICES OF WHOLE-HEARTED DISCIPLESHIP

THE PRACTICE OF PEOPLE



COMMUNITY PRACTICE GUIDE

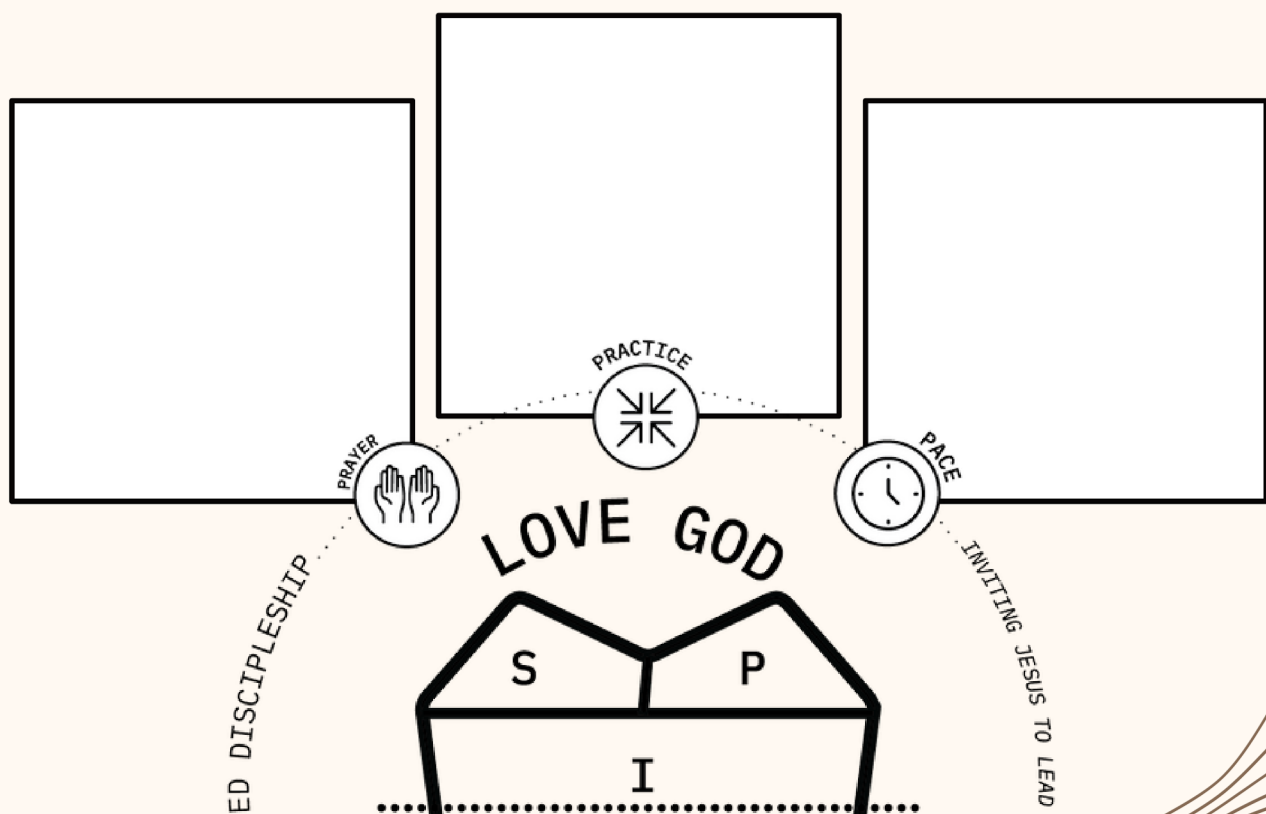
A PERSONAL RULE OF LIFE


The purpose of a rule of life is to give you a template or framework for what it looks like for you to follow Jesus in this season of your life, given your personality, gifting, story, and what God is doing in you and through you.

Take a second and check back in on your rule of life. As we've walked through the first three practices of loving God, are there specific habits, practices, or rhythms that you want to integrate into your regular practices? Write out 1-2 habits or practices that you've tried out (or want to try out) to position yourself to experience God's love in a new or deeper way in this season.

Here are some questions to think back on the past couple of weeks to identify a few practices for your rule of life.

- Which practices or habits were life-giving to me?
- What practices help me move deeper into communion with God regularly?
- What nurtures my spirit and brings me delight?
- What practices or habits would help me avoid or challenge the ways in which I tend to be pulled away from Jesus?
- What demands or "have-to's" in my life will impact my rhythms?
- How can I anticipate this in my rule of life?
- What relationships do I need to prioritize in my rule of life in this season?





On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”


“What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

“You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’”



“Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Luke 10:25-37





PAUSE

Take sixty seconds and pause, silently remembering God's presence with you today.

Pray this prayer of God's people from Psalm 14:

I know that the Lord secures justice for the poor
and upholds the cause of the needy.
Surely the righteous will praise your name,
and the upright will live in your presence.

READ & REFLECT

Read Luke 10:25-37 twice out loud.

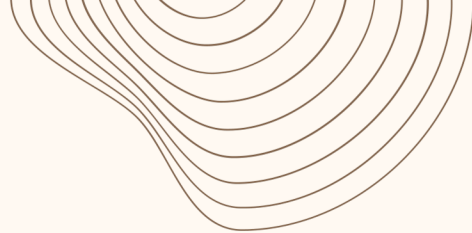
This is a familiar parable to most people, so pay careful attention to it as you read. What do you notice for the first time?

What is the expert in the law actually looking for with his question "Who is my neighbor?"

Jesus flips the expert's question around at the end from "who is my neighbor?" to "who was a neighbor to the man?" How does that challenge the expert's thinking and heart toward people?

Why is it easier **for you** to love God than to love your neighbor?





THE PRACTICE OF PEOPLE

The Practice of People means this:

**We value all people as God's image-bearers,
celebrating differences and standing up for
the dignity of the overlooked and undervalued.**

Jesus invites us to see everyone, without exception, as an image-bearer, reflecting something of who God is to us. Relationships with real people are not optional in our journey with Jesus; they are essential to our understanding of God. We cannot know and love God without also knowing and loving others.

The expert was looking for an excuse to exclude people he didn't like. Jesus' teaching in response flips his question around and confronts his prejudice: not only is he to love his neighbor, he's also to learn from and emulate the Samaritan, the very person his question was intending to exclude. Discrimination, prejudice, and racism against people made in God's image have no place in Jesus' way. Instead, we give people our time, our attention, and our care as fellow image-bearers who need the same grace Jesus offers each of us.

Jesus' way moves us beyond simply meeting people's needs. I can care for someone or meet someone's needs and yet still maintain some degree of control, power or prejudice against them in my heart and mind. Instead, Jesus challenges us with a radical reorientation of our vision: to see in the face of others, and especially in the face of those who are different than me, the image of God.

In Matthew 25, Jesus goes a step further: when you care for the poor, the imprisoned, the hungry, and the needy, you're to do it **as if unto him**, to see his face in the face of those who are overlooked, undervalued, and otherwise excluded in the world around us. Following Jesus will lead us toward the poor, the imprisoned, the hungry, and the needy because, according to Jesus, that is where we will find him, serve him, and stand with him as "Jesus in disguise."



ASK

'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for
one of the least of these brothers
and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Jesus, Matthew 25:40

Take a few moments and prayerfully ask God these questions:

Who am I excluding from your love?

What messages of fear, discrimination, or exclusion have I
internalized that you want to uproot in me?

YIELD

Each week we will consider a few yielding practices,
ways that we can begin to make space in our lives and
our habits for Jesus to lead.

- **Prioritizing people with your time.** What relationships are the most important in this current season of your life? What rhythm of intentional time do you need to build into your schedule to invest in these relationships in this season? Include this in your rule of life. When we're hurried, we're more likely to use people as a means to an end. How can you continue to build a pace of life that allows for interruptions?
- **Prioritizing people with your attention.** How can you give your full attention to people around you? Start with names. How can you develop a habit of using people's names in line at the store, at a restaurant, or on your block? You might also consider cutting off your attention to voices or messages that encourage fear, discrimination, or other-ing through media, news, or other sources as part of your rule of life.
- **Prioritizing people with your actions.** Start with **BLESS**-ing. In your rule of life, you might include a regular habit of **B**: being prayerfully present on your block or street, **L**: listening to others' stories and concerns, **E**: eating with others, **S**: serving your neighbors or neighborhood, or **S**: an intentional effort to share Jesus with someone.