



Week 1 Study Sheet

The Pause

Experience Life Together

Take a moment to think about your week and share with others. This is an exercise that can be done with God, with a family member, or within a small group (allow each group member to share briefly, thank each person for sharing before moving to the next person):

1. Share one word that best describes how your week is going.
2. Share why you feel this way and describe it briefly using a couple of sentences.
3. Share a moment from this past week that you are thankful for.

Consider

During Thanksgiving, nearly 81.8 million people traveled over 50 miles to celebrate the holiday. At Christmas, nearly 1 in 10 Americans traveled over 500 miles to be with family.¹ Thousands of yards of wrapping paper were wrapped, and countless hours were spent attending holiday festivities. The holiday season can often seem like a marathon. Then the new year comes upon us. When the ball drops, so does our excitement. We are rushed to make changes from last year's defeats.

Now, breathe. Take a deep breath and pause. Jesus gives us a prime example of how to prepare ourselves for the new year. Jesus would often pause and pray before his big ministry moments (see Mark 1:12, Luke 6:12, Matthew 15:28, and Mark 14:32). He also went away by himself after intense public moments and even to mourn the loss of John the Baptist (see Matthew 14:13). His example calls us into this new year to pause and pray. As you pause and pray, ask God to reveal new rhythms of worship to draw you closure to him this year. Ask others in your group or in the places where you live, work, learn, and play how God is challenging them to draw close to him this year.

Pray

May the God of all peace, bring calm to my mind and heart as I pause and acknowledge his presence and leading in my life. Amen.

Study

Read Psalm 1

- What words or phrases stick out as you read this passage?
- How would you define being "blessed" from this passage?
- How is God speaking to you through this passage?
- How can we build a "Rule of Life" from this passage?

Read Mark 1:35-39

- What words and phrases grab your attention as you read this passage?
- What does this passage reveal of Jesus' rule of life?
- How can you apply the way Jesus lived his life from this passage to yours?
- How does this passage challenge you?

¹<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/thanksgiving-travel-busiest-days-flying-driving/>



Week 1 Study Sheet - Continued

The Pause

Next Step

Practicing the Way is an online spiritual formation program that can help you take your next step in following Jesus. It is free and easy to navigate. One of the free resources offered through Practicing the Way is an online Rule of Life builder. A Rule of Life is a helpful planning tool to organize your life in order to live intentionally in your apprenticeship to Jesus. Visit practicingtheway.org and set up your “Rule of Life” for this year. The site will guide you through each spiritual practice and provide suggested activities and goals. Create an account, then navigate to the “Rule of Life” and start experiencing new practices with God throughout the year. Start by going through the practice of prayer on your own or with a group.

Practice

Day 1: Read [Psalm 139](#) and pray for God to search your heart as you prepare to establish new rhythms for your life.

Day 2: Read [Psalm 25](#) and pray for God to guide you today through the right paths.

Day 3: Read [John 16:13-15](#) and pray for the Holy Spirit to illuminate moments that you can share with him all day.

Day 4: Read [Psalm 139:1-12](#) and pray for God to reveal any hidden sin in your life to confess.

Day 5: Read [Luke 9:1-6](#) and pray for God to show you ways to share your faith with others.

Day 6: Read [1 Corinthians 4:17](#) and pray for God to reveal the way he desires for you to live your life.

Day 7: Read [Psalm 46:10](#) and pray for God to empower you to live the “Rule of Life” that you have established to live with him this year.



Week 2 Study Sheet

The Word

Experience Life Together

Take a moment to think about your week and share with others. This is an exercise that can be done with God, with a family member, or within a small group (allow each group member to share briefly, thank each person for sharing before moving to the next person):

1. Share one word that best describes how your week is going.
2. Share why you feel this way and describe it briefly using a couple of sentences.
3. Share a moment from this past week that you are thankful for.

Consider

Where is your favorite reading spot? Is there a cozy corner in your home? Maybe you like to listen to books while you multitask? Or you're a movie person, you catch the story when it comes to the big screen. Reading or watching a story can be entertaining, but our imagination comes alive when we immerse ourselves in the experience. Imagine reading the history of the Roman world while visiting Rome or reading Casablanca while sitting in the streets of Morocco.

There are many ways to comprehend the Bible, but it was written to be experienced. We hear the church echo shouts of joy from the Scriptures. We smell the incense from the altar in our present places of worship. We participate in prayer vigils and share the same good news from the Bible in conversations with those around us. We see the Bible narratives overlap with everyday stories around us. As you read the Bible this week, be fully engaged in the experience, and see how the same story is being lived out in your life.

Pray

Father, your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path. Help me to experience you now as those in the Bible did then. Amen.

Study

[Read Psalm 119:105-112](#)

- What words and phrases come to your attention while you read this passage?
- How does this passage describe the importance of God's Word?
- How is God using this passage to challenge your study of his Word?
- What could you add to your "Rule of Life" to deepen your study of God's Word?

[Read 2 Timothy 3:10-17](#)

- What words and phrases stick out to you from this passage?
- Are there any parts of this passage that correlate with the passage from Psalm 119?
- What is challenging about this passage? What is encouraging?
- How is God speaking to you through this passage?
- How does this passage define a "godly life?"
- How can you define the importance of experiencing God through his Word from this passage?



Week 2 Study Sheet - Continued

The Word

Practice

Use the following passages to guide your time of prayer every day this week.

Day 1: Read [Psalm 119:9](#) and pray for God to purify your heart this week.

Day 2: Read [Psalm 119:10](#) and pray to experience God's Word in new ways this day.

Day 3: Read [Psalm 119:11](#) and pray for help to retain his Word in your heart.

Day 4: Read [Psalm 119:12](#) and pray for God to teach you something new today.

Day 5: Read [Psalm 119:13](#) and pray words of praise all day.

Day 6: Read [Psalm 119:14](#) and pray for God to use your testimony to help someone.

Day 7: Read [Psalm 119:15-16](#) and pray for God to help you to be consistent in experiencing his Word daily.



Week 3 Study Sheet

The Table

Experience Life Together

Take a moment to think about your week and share with others. This is an exercise that can be done with God, with a family member, or within a small group (allow each group member to share briefly, thank each person for sharing before moving to the next person):

1. Share one word that best describes how your week is going.
2. Share why you feel this way and describe it briefly using a couple of sentences.
3. Share a moment from this past week that you are thankful for.

Consider

What if you had to play football by yourself against a team of 11? What if you were the lone basketball player against a team of 5? This doesn't seem very fair. One would decree that the odds were stacked against them, or that the game had been rigged for the other team to win!

The ironic thing is that we often choose to live life without a full team. We carry on, do it ourselves, and face life without the help of others. Yet, this is not God's design for us. This is not God's design for humanity. From the very beginning, he created humanity as a community—life was designed to be lived together. He did not move away from this concept but continued to grow the concept even more through the tribes of Israel. Six of the Ten Commandments focused on how to live life together. Fast forward to Jesus and he called the first disciples, the first community of the New Covenant to live life together with him. This same concept is still incarnated in the church today. What is the best way for us to live life together? Why is it more important to live life together than on our own?

Pray

Heavenly Father, sanctify the community around me to help me navigate through the ups and downs of life. Amen.

Study

[Read Exodus 20:1-21](#)

- What words or phrases stand out, repeat or contrast one another?
- Why is our relationship with God important first? How do the first four commandments define this relationship?
- How does God define healthy relationships with others according to the Ten Commandments?
- What is God teaching you now from reading this passage?

[Read Acts 2:42-47](#)

- What key words or phrases stand out in this passage?
- What does the New Testament version of community look like?
- How can the Ten Commandments help us in the context of Acts 2?
- How can you use these passages to define the communities you live in?



Week 3 Study Sheet - Continued

The Table

Practice

Use the following passages to guide your time of prayer every day this week.

Day 1: Read [Matthew 5:1-12](#) and pray about the Beatitudes and how this influences your community.

Day 2: Read [Matthew 5:13-16](#) and pray about how you can be salt and light in your community.

Day 3: Read [Matthew 5:17-20](#) and pray about how you can reflect Jesus in your community.

Day 4: Read [Matthew 5:21-26](#) and pray about anger you may have towards another.

Day 5: Read [Matthew 5:27-32](#) and pray about ways to preserve your character with the opposite sex or your spouse.

Day 6: Read [Matthew 5:33-42](#) and pray about how you can honor others in your community.

Day 7: Read [Matthew 5:43-48](#) and pray for others who may feel like your enemy.



Week 4 Study Sheet

The Way

Experience Life Together

Take a moment to think about your week and share with others. This is an exercise that can be done with God, with a family member, or within a small group (allow each group member to share briefly, thank each person for sharing before moving to the next person):

1. Share one word that best describes how your week is going.
2. Share why you feel this way and describe it briefly using a couple of sentences.
3. Share a moment from this past week that you are thankful for.

Consider

Behind success is a pattern of discipline. Successful people have routines and rhythms. Their consistent practice empowers their successful performance. When plans change and schedules fluctuate, having a deeply rooted rhythm of life can prepare us for success.

When it comes to our faith, we don't have to practice "being saved." We cannot be "more saved" or do it better with practice. Paul tells us, "Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1 NIV). We can however grow more into the image of Jesus every day. This is sanctification, "to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10 ESV).

This spiritual journey requires practice and should be our greatest goal on this side of Heaven. Challenge yourself this year to live by the "Rule of Life" you established at the beginning of this series. Then create healthy rhythms of discipleship by exploring the different spiritual practices that draw us closer to Jesus. Visit practicingtheway.org to learn more about other spiritual practices that you can engage in this year.

Pray

Lord, may it be my highest priority to be like, look like, and talk like you. Amen.

Study

[Read John 15:1-17](#)

- What words or phrases stick out as you read through this passage?
- What phrases build upon each other, or what words contradict?
- What is Jesus teaching about in this passage?
- What does Jesus point to as a tool to remain or abide him?
- How does abiding in Jesus become a part of our "Rule of Life?"



Week 4 Study Sheet - Continued

The Way

[Read Galatians 5:13-26](#)

- What words or phrases stick out in this passage?
- What list categories are formed in this passage?
- What are the contrasting thoughts in this passage?
- What is God trying to teach you in this passage?
- How can the Fruit of the Spirit help us with our daily experience with Jesus and others?

Practice

Use the following passages to guide your time of prayer every day this week.

Day 1: Read [Romans 8:1-11](#) and pray about how you can live your life in the Spirit?

Day 2: Read [Ephesians 4:11-12](#) and pray about what gift God has given you to serve.

Day 3: Read [Romans 12:3-8](#) and pray about ways you can extend God's grace to others.

Day 4: Read [1 Corinthians 12](#) and pray about how you can serve at Oak Hills Church.

Day 5: Read [Acts 1:8](#) and pray for the Holy Spirit to give you power to be his witness.

Day 6: Read [Matthew 28:16-20](#) and pray about how you can deepen your walk as a disciple.

Day 7: Ask God to guide you to a clear next step in journey with him and write down what he says.