



Practice

**practicing the way
of Jesus, together**



Practice Overview

Being an apprentice of Jesus means re-organizing your life around three goals:

1. **Being with Jesus**

This means that the first priority and primary goal of apprenticeship is to learn to live in a constant state of awareness of God, to learn how to abide in the love of God. This is all about learning how to keep company with God through the Holy Spirit.

2. **Becoming like Jesus**

The goal of this abiding is to bear fruit. To become like the thing you're attached to. This is the genius of Jesus—a human being becomes most like their attachments. The goal is increasing Christlikeness.

3. **Doing what Jesus did**

If you're apprenticing as a plumber, the goal isn't just to take exams. It's to be able to plumb a house. If you're apprenticing to Jesus, the goal isn't bible knowledge or church gathering attendance, but to change so that you can have the capacity to do the very same things.

But as we've been reminded in the video, this stuff doesn't just happen—it takes practice. This is an entire life's pursuit. It is not just an event on a Sunday, not something I 'dabble in', but a "way" of life in community around the person of Jesus.

With the hope of being visible and tangible in how we are practicing the way of Jesus, our *Marks of Practice* are a simple way of ordering our loves to move in the four directions of *Upward, Inward, Withward, and Outward*.

Cultivating Marks of Practice

The following process is one that Ruth Haley Barton offers as series of questions and prompts that will help you set your personal practice.

1. **Reflect**

Attend to your desire. What words, phrases, prayers seem to most consistently capture your sense of longing for God?

Acknowledge the mystery of spiritual transformation and your powerlessness to bring it about. In what areas of your life are you most aware of your need for change? Tell God of your desire to make yourself available to him so that he can do the transforming work.

Listening to your experiences. What spiritual practices and relationships seem to be most powerful in fulfilling the desire of your heart? Are there activities that are

particularly suited for your personality type? Where have you experienced growth in the past?

2. Plan

What concrete activities do you want to engage in as a way of offering yourself to God?

Write out your plan. Be sure to take in the limits and opportunities of your life stage, your personality, and your circumstances. What practices will you engage in on a daily basis? Weekly, Monthly? Where will you engage these? What time of day/week/year?

What schedule changes will you need to make in order to consistently choose these life-giving disciplines? Are there things you will need to say no to in order to engage these practices?

Are there arrangements that you need to make with those you live with in order to make these commitments possible?

Are there practices that are particularly needed because of sin patterns in your life?

3. Commit

After you've written out a plan, take a break. Go for a walk, take a nap, pray. Feel free to set it aside for a day or two. Then come back to it and take a fresh look.

Does this look realistic? Is this personal to you enough?

Are you able to think of your *Marks of Practice* as a flexible undertaking rather than a legalistic straight jacket?

Now, commit to it prayerfully out of a loving response to God rather than a sense of duty or obligation. Remember, these marks of practice are a means of opening ourselves to God's transforming love in us.

4. Share

Use your community. Share with your roommate, a pastor, your Spiritual Director, or your Neighbourhood Group what practices you are engaging in.

5. Revisit

Periodically take time to notice what. Feel free to explore and experiment with your practices. Consider after six months any adjustments that need to be made.

Summary

The following are general areas of practice that you can use as prompts as you make your practice more customized. Included in this doc is a worksheet for you to develop your own personal *Marks of Practice*.

UPWARD

- Scripture
- Prayer: Daily Office, Prayer Nights, Lectio Divina
- Spiritual Direction
- Silence and Solitude
- Sunday Gatherings

INWARD

- Honoring the body: exercise and rest
- Sabbath
- Play and recreation
- Counselling
- Confession

WITHWARD

- Community
- Regular time with extended family or chosen family
- Hospitality

OUTWARD

- Neighbourhood engagement
- Service and mission
- Volunteering

Marks of Practice | Worksheet

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

This worksheet is a prompt and tool to make personal commitments in practicing the way of Jesus. This is about being intentional (to the deepest values that God has implanted in you), being practical (discovering a doable rhythm), and offering an embodied life as a loving gift to God.

After reading the 'Cultivating Marks of Practice' section in the Practice Overview doc, prayerfully fill out the worksheet. You will see some practices listed in grey—these are the practices we're calling all of our partners, by God's grace, to engage in. Plan to share it with a trusted friend or your Neighbourhood Group. Plan to annually review it.

I make the following commitments noted below that I'm not trying to impress God, or anyone else:

- trusting that God is already present with love at the core of my being,
- grateful that I have the privilege of a unique experience of intimacy with God,
- aware that I cannot do this on my own, and knowing that I may need to change or deepen these choices over time to stay present to the movement of God's Spirit in me.

UPWARD

in my relationship to God...

INWARD

in my relationship to myself...

Sunday Gatherings

RECEIVE LOVE,
GIVE LOVE

Joining a Group and a Team

Giving financially

WITHWARD

in my relationship to others...

OUTWARD

in my relationship to creation/city/culture...