

THE BOOK OF

PHILIPPIANS

LEARNING TO LIVE AS CITIZENS OF HEAVEN

EVERYDAY PRACTICES FOR PURPOSEFUL LIVING MODELLED FROM THE EARLY CHURCH IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

This tool is designed to help every follower of Jesus do exactly that, follow Jesus...with intention. Whether you've been walking with Jesus for years, brand new to faith, or perhaps burnt out on religion, there is something here for you.

This is not a program nor a checklist of "to dos," but an invitation into a way of life that we hope transforms our relationship with Jesus and our impact in this world in new and profound ways. We encourage you to share and use this resource with your family, your small group, and others you are in community with and investing in.

This tool is intentionally divided into six different practices with the idea of focusing on one practice at a time. Begin slow, perhaps by concentrating on 1 practice a month and then add in new ones with time. Celebrate whatever progress you make as you go, whether big or small! Be patient with yourself, receive His grace along the journey. We will never fully arrive, but transformation is made up of a lifetime of small daily decisions of listening and obeying.

We believe that as we incorporate these practices into our everyday living, with time, they will simply become part of us, and who we are as followers of Jesus. We will look back and see how much we have grown and matured. Imagine what our world and communities would look like if everyone was intentionally living with greater spiritual purpose?

Enjoy the journey friends, as we collectively grow deeper with intentionality!

PRACTICE #1: LISTEN & OBEY (GROWTH)

In our fast-paced, busy lives, it is often difficult to make space to stop and listen to what Jesus is saying to us. We struggle to confidently recognize the voice of the Lord and often don't recognize where He already is at work. These simple practices of listening and obeying can truly be transformative in our relationship with Jesus and for His kingdom.

Respond to God's prompts

This is simply a practice of recognizing where God is already at work and responding to it. Here's how to do it:

1. **Pray**, "Jesus, show me what you see" or "Help me to see where you are at work."
2. **Pay Attention** to what pops into your mind. . .
 - Are there certain people that come to mind?
 - Do you feel drawn toward a particular action?
 - Are you being prompted toward a specific need?
3. **Ask** "What am I going to do about it?" (Then do it!)

Join the Kairos Moments

Kairos is Greek for "right time" or "opportune moment." There are special moments in time when something pivotal happens in our lives, whether positive or negative. (Think of a marriage, a divorce, a loss of life, a milestone...)

It's in these moments, that often God has something deeper for us to learn. In a Kairos moment (whether good or bad), try this simple practice of asking these two questions...

- 1) What is God saying to me?
- 2) What am I going to do about it? (Then do it)

PRACTICE #2: DEVELOP WEEKLY RHYTHMS

We all have rhythms, whether good or bad. What rhythms are currently forming us? Are they moving us toward deeper intimacy with Jesus or are they pulling us away? If we don't intentionally establish positive rhythms, unhealthy rhythms can form us. Consider some of these practices to help develop valuable weekly rhythms in our lives:

Remember the sabbath

Sabbath means setting aside a day for rest. Jesus was the first to model the importance of rest. What would it look like to set aside one day a week just to slow down? Set work aside, unplug from electronics, and spend quality time being present with the Lord, your family and in community with others.

Pray & worship

Prayer & worship is not something to check off a list each day, but ought to be incorporated into every aspect of our lives. What if we lived "before the face of God", under the authority of God, for the glory of God as a daily act of worship? When God brings someone to mind, we pray for them. When we are in awe of God's beauty, we worship Him. When we receive an unexpected blessing, we thank Him. All day. Every day.

Soak in His Word

When we allow the Word of God to permeate our entire being, it fills us with hope, strength, and encouragement. What would it look like if we reflected on just one passage every day and respond to these simple questions?

- What words or phrases stood out?
- What does this say about God? About humanity?
- What is God saying to me? How am I going to respond?

PRACTICE #3: PRIORITIZE COMMUNITY

We are created to be in relationship, to follow Jesus in community. We need one another to learn, grow and to help us become the best versions of ourselves. We need people to celebrate victories and share burdens with. Here are a few simple practices that will hopefully help us connect into significant, meaningful relationships and community.

Practice hospitality

The early church in Acts had a regular practice of opening their homes for fellowship and the breaking of bread. Something special happens when we gather around the table for a meal. Who are the people you could welcome into your home? A neighbor, a new family from church, an immigrant family? What would it look like to create a regular rhythm of sharing meals together with other families? Perhaps weekly, bi-weekly or monthly? Include your children in the process!

Find your people

If you aren't sharing life on a regular basis with a core group of people, find them. Ask your church if there's a small group you can join. Groups of fellow believers help us grow, keep us accountable, and encourage us to bravely step into the things God is calling us toward. We need our people!

Gather in corporate worship

Just as small groups are important, so are larger gatherings of the body of Christ. There is something very powerful and unifying when we all gather for worship, fellowship and to grow together in community. If you are not in the habit of showing up to gather corporately, consider making this part of your weekly routine.

PRACTICE #4: GROW IN GENEROSITYS

The early church modelled well for us an interdependent lifestyle of meeting one another's needs. They continuously practiced offering whatever they had for the benefit of others. What is it that we have? What generosity practices can we incorporate into our everyday lives?

Devote time

One of our biggest assets is time. What might be the needs in your own local parish, within your church or around the world that could be met by simply showing up? Is there an elderly neighbor who needs assistance? A local shelter in need of help? A social justice cause you can be involved with? A church ministry team that could use your gifts? A service-learning trip you could join? Find something and do it. Include your children!

Dedicate money

Everything we have has been generously given from the Lord. What would it look like to challenge ourselves (or your family) to give a percentage more each year than you did the previous? To your church, toward Kingdom causes (both locally & around the world) and to those in need?

Allocate resources

What other resources do you possess that could meet a need of another? Do you have an extra room in your home for a guest, an extra vehicle that could be borrowed, a backyard for a gathering? Everyone has something to offer whether big or small. Find an opportunity and meet a need.

PRACTICE #5: REACH OUT TO OTHERS

Jesus's final words were "Go and make disciples of all nations". A disciple is simply "a learner or follower of Jesus". How are we personally helping others know and follow Jesus? Is this a regular practice in our lives? If not, consider the following...

Share your faith

How are you regularly pointing others toward Jesus and sharing what He is doing in your life? Are you creating space to initiate spiritual conversations? Perhaps practice keeping a running list on your phone or in a notebook of the ways that God is at work so you will be prepared to give testimony at any given notice.

Invest in others

It is encouraged, that at any given time, we should have 1 or 2 people we are investing in spiritually. (For parents, your children are a great place to start!) If you don't have anyone, consider finding someone (especially our younger generation) who is receptive to growing and walking deeper with Jesus. Then consider the following:

- Allow them access to your life. Share life together. Meals, activities, ministry, etc.
- Model to them a purposeful lifestyle, how you make decisions, how you relate with others, how you care for people, how you practice healthy rhythms, etc.
- Equip & empower them toward kingdom living. Help them discover and live into their unique gifts and calling.

Multiply disciples

In addition, we need to multiply disciples of Jesus. How can you help equip your 1 or 2 people to also be investing in 1 or 2 others? This is where true kingdom multiplication happens!

PRACTICE #6: INVEST IN THE MISSION

Collectively we are on a mission. We desire to see everyone, everywhere experience and be transformed by the love of God. But in order to do this, we each need to take personal responsibility for the mission by practicing our gifts, serving in the local church and reaching out to the world.

Exercise your gifts & calling

We all have unique gifts and calling to contribute toward the mission. Take time to consider the following:

- Is there a specific passion the Lord has placed on your heart? (Think, what keeps you up at night?) What is one next step you can take toward that calling?
- Have you discovered yet what are the unique gifts the Lord has given you? If not, take a spiritual gifts test!
- If you know, are you actively practicing them? If not, seek ways to use them for kingdom purposes!

Serve the local church

What is your or family's unique contribution toward the mission through the local church? The church is designed to be a fishing vessel where everyone who comes on board has a role to play, not a cruise ship where people come to eat, be entertained, and served. If you are not already serving on a ministry team at your church, find one and become part of the mission.

Reach the world

What is your contribution toward the commission of discipling the nations? Listen to how the Lord might be prompting you or your family to participate in His global Kingdom work through prayer, sending of workers, ministry to immigrants and refugees or even bringing the good news to unreached areas of world.