

Formation

Part 02

Overview

In the last session, we explored the reality that we're *already being formed* by our habits, relationships, environments, and more. Therefore, all formation in the Way of Jesus is *counter-formation*. As apprentices of Jesus, our goal is to intentionally slow our lives down to find deep joy in walking with Jesus.

Practice reflection

Before we begin Session 03, break up into small groups and share your reflections on last session's Formation Audit exercise.

- 01 What did you find helpful about taking the Formation Audit?
- 02 When you consider the ways you are being unintentionally formed, what felt most challenging?
- 03 Did anything surprise you?

Teaching

Scripture

The apprentice is not above the rabbi, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their rabbi.

—Luke 6v40*

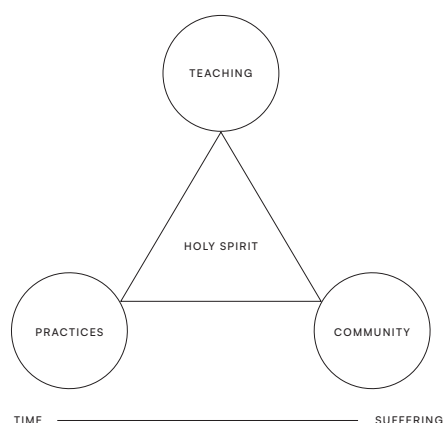
Session summary

- We may desire to become more like Jesus, but feel stuck.
- The problem is that we don't know *how* to become like Jesus.
- We need a training program — a reliable pathway to transformation.
- We find this in the Way of Jesus, where we are formed by:
 - The Practices
 - Community
 - Teaching
 - The Holy Spirit
- Formation happens over time and through suffering.
- And one of the best ways to begin to change is to replace an unhealthy habit with the practice of reading Scripture daily.

* Key words adapted

Intentional Spiritual Formation*

*Adapted from Dr. James Bryan Smith's 'Triangle of Transformation' in *The Good and Beautiful God*.



Teaching notes

As you watch Session 03 together, feel free to use this page to take notes.

Discussion questions

Pause the video and take some time to process together as a community.

Here are some questions for discussion:

- 01 Have you ever had a moment in your discipleship where you felt “stuck,” whether in habits, unhealthy emotional patterns, or in your relationship to God?
- 02 With the paradigm of Intentional Spiritual Formation in mind, how have you participated in your own formation over the years?
- 03 How have you understood the Holy Spirit’s role in spiritual formation?
- 04 Have you had an experience of intentionally opening your pain and suffering to God? What did God produce in your formation through that experience?

Practice notes

[illegible]

After the video

Closing prayer

End your time together by praying this liturgy:

Thank you, Father, for your word,
for your Son who speaks it to us,
and for your Spirit who illumines it within.
Teach us how to read it with you,
that we may learn to love its wisdom,
goodness, and truth, growing in your Way.
Amen.

OPTIONAL

If you'd like to continue your conversation, here are some additional questions for reflection:

- 01 How do you currently engage with Scripture?**
- 02 What comes up for you when you think about starting your day with a rhythm of reading Scripture? What would you like to share with your group?**
- 03 As a group, talk about your plan for this week. Will you use a reading plan or a particular book of the Bible? What time and setting is best for you? (Reading plan ideas are listed at the end of the Practice section.)**

Practice

Daily reading of Scripture

Information alone doesn't produce transformation. To grow, let's put what we've learned into practice.

Last session, you conducted a Formation Audit. You made a list of all your habits and relationships, and then you attempted to connect the dots between them and your formation or deformation.

Did you identify any habits or relationships or stories that seem to be having a negative effect on you?

This session's practice is to take the next step and replace an old habit with a new practice.

And if it's not already a part of your daily life with God, we invite you to begin the practice of reading Scripture. The best way to do this is likely to *add* it to the daily prayer rhythm you began two sessions ago. Hopefully by now you're learning to carve out a quiet place and time, and come to quiet before God. A next step could be to integrate the reading of Scripture into your daily rhythm in a prayerful, peaceful way.

Here are a few reminders from the Prayer Practice:

01 Identify a quiet *place* that is distraction-free.

- This could be a corner in your home or a nearby park. Find somewhere that you can focus and be at peace.
- If at all possible (unless you're using an app to read or follow a reading plan), put your phone away in another room.

02 Identify a quiet *time*.

- For many people, first thing upon waking is the best possible time to do this; but for you, it may be before bed, or while your baby is napping mid-morning, or on a lunch break.
- The general rule is: *Give God your best time of the day.*

03 Come to quiet

- Start with a few deep breaths ... in and out of your nose, and let your mind and body calm down.
- This may take a few minutes. You're not in a hurry.
- And then ...

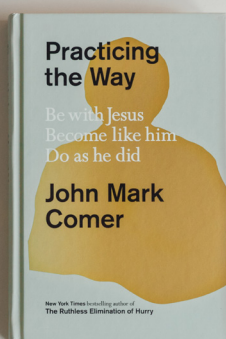
04 Open your heart to God in prayer

- Again, there's no "right" way to pray. But you don't have to start from scratch.

05 Read Scripture

- Choose a section of Scripture or follow a Bible reading plan suggested in the Keep Growing section below.
- As you read, you might want to notice what resonates with you, what emotionally lifts off the page and into your heart.
- Your goal is to listen for Jesus' voice coming to you.

This whole exercise can be done in five minutes, or it can easily take up to an hour — again, that's up to you. The key is: Start where you *are*, not where you feel you "should" be.



This session's reading

For this session, we're reading "Goal #2: Become like him," in *Practicing the Way* by John Mark Comer, pp. 64-117.

Resources to go deeper

If you're interested in learning more about intentional spiritual formation or the practice of reading Scripture, here are some more resources to consider.

BibleProject

We highly recommend the amazing videos and resources from our friends at BibleProject, who are all about helping people engage with Scripture as a unified story that leads to Jesus.

On the topic of Scripture, we recommend the following:

- For a taste, the Genesis 1 video: link.practictheway.org/course-s3a
- On reading Scripture, the How to Read the Bible video series: link.practictheway.org/course-s3b
- To go deeper, the Paradigm podcast: bibleproject.com/podcast/series/paradigm

BibleProject reading plans, bibleproject.com/reading-plans, and some suggestions:

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|--|--------|
| • <i>The Character of God</i> | 6 days |
| • <i>Introduction to the Christian Faith</i> | 8 days |
| • <i>What Gives You Hope?</i> | 7 days |
| • <i>Trusting God Through Suffering</i> | 6 days |
| • <i>One Story That Leads to Jesus</i> | 1 year |

Recommended reading

- *The Renovation of the Heart* by Dallas Willard
- *Liturgy of the Ordinary* by our guest, Tish Harrison Warren
- *Shaped by the Word* by M. Robert Mulholland

Recommended listening

- The Scripture Practice teaching series by Bridgetown Church: bridgetown.church/series/scripture
- The Year of Biblical Literacy by Reality San Francisco: realitysf.com/bible
- Episode 03 of the Practicing the Way podcast: link.practictheway.org/course-s3

Additional Resources

- The Scripture Practice from Practicing the Way: practictheway.org/scripture (coming January 2025). If you'd like to learn more about the practice of reading Scripture, you can run the Scripture Practice, a four-session experience designed to integrate the practice of reading Scripture into your regular life.



Guest bio

Our guest this session was Tish Harrison Warren, author and priest in the Anglican Church in North America. Learn more about her and her work at tishharrisonwarren.com.

Practice reflection

Reflection is a key component in our spiritual formation. Like practice, it allows what we learn to become a part of who we are.

Before your next time together, take five to ten minutes to journal out your answers to the following four questions.

- 01 How did your practice of reading Scripture go following the last session?
- 02 Where did you experience resistance in this practice?
- 03 In what ways did you encounter God in it?
- 04 Did anything surprise you?