



# GROWTH PLAN



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Hello Northview,

I want you to take a moment and think about some of the most important achievements of your life. It could be graduating from college, starting a business, getting in shape, learning an instrument. There's one thing that all of our major accomplishments have in common: they required a plan. Without a plan, the hopes and dreams in our hearts would never get any traction.

All of your accomplishments matter, but none are as important as growing to reflect the life and love of Jesus. It's the reason you and I were put on this earth! That's why it is so troubling that less than one in every five Christ-followers has a measurable plan for their spiritual growth. Without a plan for our spiritual growth, we can be faithful church attenders, but still never become all God has in mind for us to become.

That is why I'm so glad that you've picked up a copy of the Growth Plan. This newly revised Growth Plan will help you to assess the practices that you need to sustain you on your discipleship journey: Bible-reading, prayer, worship, rest, serving and relationships. The Growth Plan will help you create a plan for each of these important components of your discipleship.

Once you have a solid foundation of sustaining rhythms, you will be encouraged to identify a growth area. The Growth Plan will help you assess how God is leading you to grow and then guide you to the resources and relationships you need for transformation to take place.

This could truly be a life-changing experience for you and for our church and I look forward to hearing the stories of all that God does over the course of the next 90 days.

Love ya,

Steve



# INTRODUCTION

*Wellness.* If we used this word just 10 years ago, folks might not have known what we were talking about. Today, a lucrative industry has been built around the concept of wellness. By 2017, wellness was a \$4.2 trillion industry, and it continues to grow.

Of course, it's good to take care of our physical and emotional well-being. Eating healthy foods, getting sufficient rest, managing stress levels and staying active are necessary rhythms for sustaining a healthy life. And, they're key to feeling and performing well.

Similarly, in our journey with God, there are sustaining rhythms that keep us attuned to God and connected to the Church. Jesus modeled for us a way of living unhurried by getting away from the crowds, finding a place to be alone, connecting with the Father and pouring into His disciples (Mark 1:35, 45; Luke 5:15-16; Mark 2:2; Luke 6:12-13; Matt. 14:13).

Similarly, the book of Acts portrays how the early church had a set of sustaining rhythms:

*"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ... Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."* (Acts 2:42-47)

We can learn from both Jesus and the early church by adopting these rhythms: practicing solitude and silence, studying the Bible, praying, participating in worship services, living a life marked by worship, being involved in discipleship relationships, serving others and resting.



Nurturing these practices helps us grow in our ability to resist sin, be led by the Holy Spirit and know, love and serve God and others. And over time, as we engage in these sustaining practices, they shape our character so we reflect Jesus more and more.

If you were to visit a wellness coach today, you'd likely be asked to reflect on your daily habits to determine what you are doing—or *not* doing—to promote your physical and emotional health, and what might be eroding your well-being. Based on your findings, you would come up with a plan to get on track to achieve your health and wellness goals.

The first portion of this Growth Plan is the spiritual equivalent of a visit to a wellness coach. It's an invitation to take inventory of the daily and weekly rhythms of your spiritual life to determine what you are doing—or *not* doing—to promote spiritual health, and what you can do to improve. Based on your findings, you will be encouraged to create a growth plan focused on sustaining rhythms—your day-to-day spiritual practices.

The second portion of this Growth Plan will guide you to develop stretching rhythms. Stretching rhythms help you to grow by equipping you to surrender a stubborn part of your will, developing compassion, engaging in service to others or learning how to share your faith, among others.

Altogether, this is a 90-day journey that, by God's leading, will provide you with a growth plan of rhythms of life that will both *sustain* and *stretch* you as you grow more and more into the likeness of Jesus.



## YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO IT ALONE

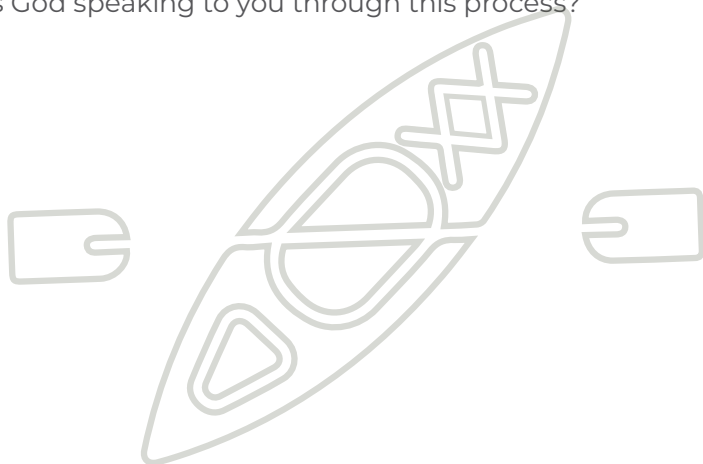
Your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan is designed with daily readings that you work through on your own. However, the journey of discipleship is so much richer, more fruitful and far more enjoyable when you go with others.

- If you've been a Christ-follower for a long time, consider reaching out to someone who is newer in their faith. Invite them to meet up weekly or every-other-week for coffee and conversation about your sustaining rhythms.
- If you're a new Christ-follower, don't be afraid to reach out to a Christ-follower you admire and ask them to meet with you during this time.

There are only good things that can come of meeting with someone else to discuss your respective plans for following Jesus. So whether you are exploring, beginning, growing or discipling, don't hesitate to invite someone else along for the journey.

When you meet, here are three simple questions you can ask one another:

1. What have you learned so far?
2. What sustaining rhythms have you chosen and why did you choose those?
3. How is God speaking to you through this process?





# SUSTAINING RHYTHMS

This daily guide is to be used every day  
this week to work your personal plan.

## **GROWTH PLAN WORSHIP PLAYLISTS**

A great way to stay immersed in the work God is doing in you through the Growth Plan is through worship music. For this reason, we've created a Northview Worship-approved playlist for each week. You can find an extended playlist on Spotify.

### **DAILY GUIDE: DAYS 1-7**

#### **Spotify Search: Northview Church Growth Plan - Scripture**

"Your Word" | Hillsong Worship

"Word of God" | Brenton Brown

"Say the Word" | Hillsong United

### **DAILY GUIDE: DAYS 8-14**

#### **Spotify Search: Northview Church Growth Plan - Prayer**

"Nothing Else" | Cody Carnes

"Pray" | Worship Central

"Fade Away" | Passion

"Pray Something" | SEU Worship

### **DAILY GUIDE: DAYS 15-21**

#### **Spotify Search: Northview Church Growth Plan - Worship Service**

"Open the Gates" | Vertical Worship

"Hands to the Heavens" | Kari Jobe

"1000 Tongues" | Vertical Worship

"Way Maker" | Leeland

### **DAILY GUIDE: DAYS 22-28**

#### **Spotify Search: Northview Church Growth Plan - Rest**

"Lord, I Need You" | Passion

"Find You on My Knees" | Kari Jobe

"Be Still My Soul" | Pat Barrett

"Sanctuary" | SEU Worship

### **DAILY GUIDE: DAYS 29-35**

#### **Spotify Search: Northview Church Growth Plan - Relationship**

"City On A Hill" | Influence Music

"Greatest of These" | Hillsong United

"Make Us One" | Jesus Culture

"Good Grace" | Hillsong United

### **DAILY GUIDE: DAYS 36-42**

#### **Spotify Search: Northview Church Growth Plan - Serving**

"Hands and Feet" | The Brilliance

"God of Justice" | Tim Hughes

"Break Our Hearts" | Vicki Beeching

"So Will I" | Hillsong United

FIND THE WORSHIP PLAYLIST FOR THIS WEEK ON PAGE 8

# DAILY GUIDE

days 1-7



# DAY 1 | MONDAY

\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Ever seen a vision board? A vision board is a tool to help clarify and keep your focus on a specific goal. With today's technology, you can easily create a vision board using a digital tool such as Pinterest. Or you can go old-school and use poster boards and magazine cutouts of images and/or words to inspire and motivate yourself toward what you want to be, do or have in life.

Even if you haven't created a vision board, you likely have mental pictures of your goals, hopes and desires. You might envision yourself with healthier relationships, a healthier body or a healthier bank balance. But we shouldn't stop at dreaming. We should put practices in place to help achieve our goals. Sometimes this can even mean rearranging our whole life to make realizing those goals a priority.

To work toward having healthier relationships, you might cut out doing something you love so you can invest time in the people you love. For a healthier body, you might start exercising and change how you eat so you can look and feel better. For healthier finances, you might cut back on needless spending to pay off debt and save more.

Author Annie Dillard rightly suggests, "How we spend our days is how we spend our lives."<sup>1</sup> In other words, **your various practices shape how you live.** Your practices—things you sometimes even do without thinking—either pave the way to the realization of your goals or get in the way of living the life you desire.

This is precisely why your spiritual practices are important: They sustain you in the journey of discipleship, and they pave the way to the abundant life Jesus made available. Essentially, they shape your life.



**The first 40 days of this Growth Plan are an invitation to focus on the key practices of your spiritual life:** Bible-reading, prayer, worship service participation, rest, service and relationships. You'll be encouraged to consider what makes these practices so formative, and assess how you are currently engaged in each.

If you follow along and do the exercises, you'll end up with a Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan, a set of practices to move you in the direction of your vision for a healthy spiritual life.

**The first step toward that goal is to have a vision.** *What's yours? If you were to live the life you believe God has in mind for you, how would you be spending your days? What would your pace of life be? What would your relationship with God be like? How would your other relationships look? Whose life would God be using you to impact?*



Take a moment to bring these questions to God in prayer. Then, using the box on the next page, create a vision board for your life. Write down words and/or draw or paste images that express what you truly desire in your relationship with God and others. You can make this as simple or as creative as you want. You could even use Pinterest or a vision board app instead. However you do it, keep in mind: **Getting clear about what you envision can be key to growing in your walk with God.**

*Day 1 continued on next page....*

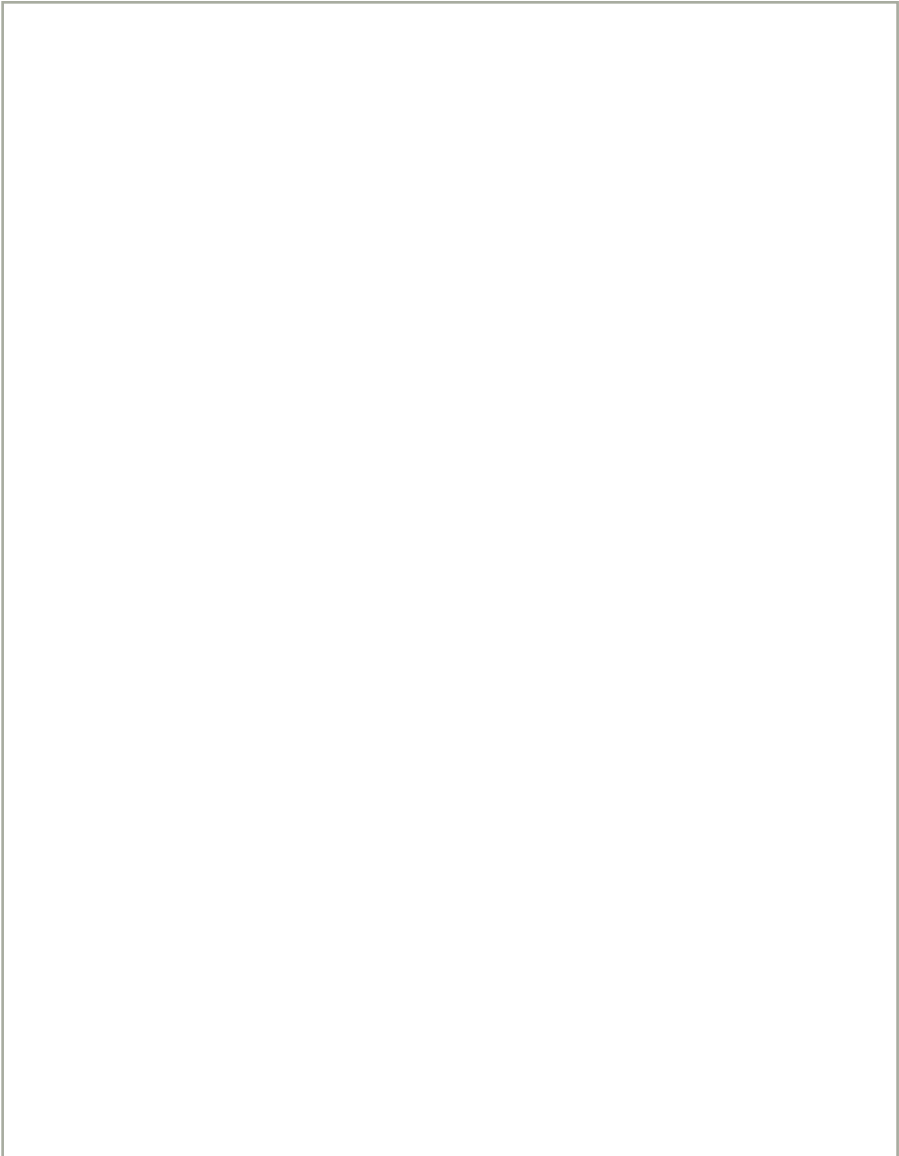
# DAY 1 | MONDAY

**A compelling vision is an essential first step to set you on a path toward the life God has for you.** Your God-given vision for life will propel you into practices that God will use to help you realize your vision.

Create your vision board using the space to the right.



# The Vision Board for My Life



So, how does your vision board look? Does it inspire you to move toward healthy rhythms of life and relationships? If not, continue developing it. Keep asking God to give you a clear vision.



## DAY 2 | TUESDAY


Study Jesus, and you'll find He spent most of His time casting a vision of life in the kingdom of God, that is, the way God intends life to be. In fact, Jesus tells us that He came to live among us so we can "have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10b)

Jesus calls His message of full life "good news." He challenges us to "repent and believe the good news" (Mark 1:15), which means we should turn from our old way of living and start living God's way.

So, what is God's way? Here are some of the key teachings of Jesus about the life God makes available:

- Jesus urges us to put our trust in God and not to worry (Matt. 6:25-34; Luke 12:22)
- Jesus challenges us to be generous (Matt. 6:19-21; Luke 6:38)
- Jesus commands us to not judge others (Luke 6:37-42; Matt. 7:1-5)
- Jesus summons us to handle conflict well, to forgive and to live at peace with one another (Matt. 5:9, 38-39, 18:21-22; Mark 11:25)
- Jesus invites us into a life of compassion (Luke 14:12-14)
- Jesus compels us to know and depend on God (John 15)
- Jesus challenges us to love and pray for our enemies, and to love others as we love ourselves (Luke 6:27-36; Matt. 5:43-48, 7:12, 22:39)

But Jesus didn't just teach about this vision; He lived it. In other words, **Jesus didn't have a vision board; He was a vision board.**



What enabled Jesus to live life the way God intended from the beginning of time? Some would argue He succeeded only because He was the Son of God. But the Bible tells us that Jesus, though fully and truly God's Son, was also fully human (Phil 2:6-7). So, where did He find the strength to live God's vision for a full and abundant life?

**Jesus engaged in a set of practices that sustained Him and kept Him focused on God's will.**

He engaged in solitude and prayer (Luke 5:16, 6:12). He took a day of rest/Sabbath (Luke 4:16). Jesus fasted (Luke 4:1-13; Matt. 4:1-11). He had meaningful, supportive friendships (Luke 6:13-16). He participated in weekly worship (Luke 4:16). Jesus engaged in a life of service to others (Matt. 14:13-21, 20:28; Luke 13:10-13, 17:11-14). And He studied the Scriptures (Luke 2:46-47, 4:15).

*If Jesus needed these practices to sustain Him in His relationship with God and others, and to help Him live out God's vision for an abundant life, how much more do we need these practices to sustain and strengthen us?*



Beginning tomorrow, you'll be invited to reflect on the practices necessary to sustain you as you pursue the abundant life God offers you.

- As you wrap up today's reflection, take a few minutes to review the regular practices that sustained Jesus as outlined above.
- Next, turn back to your vision board. Is there anything from Jesus' list that is not reflected on your vision board and needs to be there? Go ahead and add it.
- Ask God to guide you as you put together a vision that energizes and excites you; that speaks to the desires God has placed in your heart. And ask God to open your heart as you evaluate your practices and develop a plan for spiritual wellness.

## DAY 3 | WEDNESDAY

The Bible. Without question, it is the most influential book ever written. This best-selling book of all time has had more than five billion copies distributed globally. The Bible contains wisdom that has shaped individuals' lives, societies, churches and even governments for about 1,600 years.

In a research study called REVEAL<sup>2</sup>, more than half a million congregants were surveyed about spiritual practices. **More than any other spiritual practice, reading and reflecting on Scripture was identified as the most powerful practice for spiritual growth.** Why is that? What is it about being in God's Word that makes it such a formative practice? Consider a few functions of Scripture:

The Bible teaches us that God is the Creator, Sustainer and Savior of the world and that His intentions for us are pure and loving.

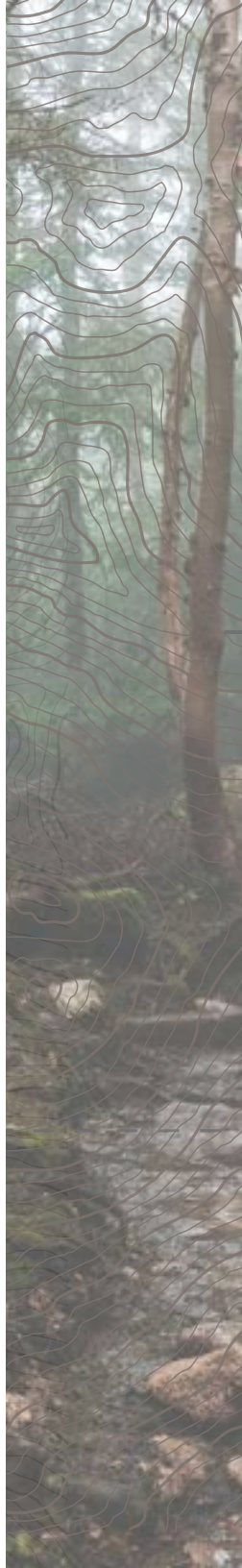
It is the account of God's action to reconcile humanity to Himself and to bring healing to the brokenness in the world.

Scripture reveals to us God's purposes in the world and how we are to partner with God and, thereby, discover our own purpose.

It is a source of comfort to those who grieve, a source of wisdom for those who follow its teachings, a source of peace in our anxiety and a source of hope in our despair.

The Bible shapes our worldview so that we know how to live as God desires and intends.

As we meditate on Scripture, we discover a means of connecting intimately with God and others.





There are a number of occasions where biblical authors state clearly the function and role of Scripture for our lives. For example, the Apostle Paul wrote: *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work."* (2 Tim 3:16-17)

The psalmist identifies some of the personal benefits that come from following the teaching of the Bible: *"The instructions of the Lord are perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The commandments of the Lord are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are clear, giving insight for living. ... The laws of the Lord are true; each one is fair. They are more desirable than gold, even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb. They are a warning to your servant, a great reward for those who obey them."* (Ps 19:7-11)

As wonderful as these truths about the Bible are, many people fail to have rich, satisfying and transformative encounters with Scripture. Usually, this is because we lack a clear plan and purpose for engaging with it. Once we understand there are a variety of ways to engage Scripture, we can often be more purposeful in our reading of it.



Tomorrow, you will be introduced to some of those ways.  
For now, pause and respond:

What are you currently doing to engage with the Bible?

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Day 3 continued on next page...



# DAY 3 | WEDNESDAY

Circle a response below that best describes your current Bible-reading practice:

I enjoy reading the Bible.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

Reading the Bible gives me life!

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

What other ways have you read or studied the Bible that have been helpful for you?

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## DAY 4 | THURSDAY

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**“If you are weary of some sleepy form of devotion, probably God is as weary of it as you are.” <sup>3</sup>**

~ Frank Laubach

Let those words sink in for a moment. God doesn't want our encounters with Him to be boring, lifeless and uninspiring. God is *relational*. Through His Word, God longs to connect with us in ways that bring us joy, comfort, challenge, new insight and inspiration. But many folks fail to grasp this and as a result, their time spent studying the Bible becomes just another box to check.

**We need to learn to approach Scripture with intention.** When we aren't clear about what we're trying to get from our time reading the Bible, we'll soon drift off and lose interest. But when we approach reading the Bible with purpose—say, to hear from God, or to wrestle with finding answers to our questions, to reflect on how what we're reading applies to our lives, to hide His truths in our hearts or even to expand our worldview—we will experience the life-giving and life-transforming power of God's Word.

*“For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” (Heb 4:12)*



Today, you will explore a variety of ways to read and study the Bible and encounter God through His Word. Additionally, you will be introduced to some of the best resources available for engaging in these practices.



You can access the full descriptions and explore the various resources and tools on the Growth Plan Resource page at [northviewchurch.us/grow](https://northviewchurch.us/grow). There you'll find the following approaches to engaging with the Bible:

**Devotional Bible-Reading**

**Memorization**

**Journaling**

**Bible Study with Others**

**Inductive Bible Study**

**1-Year Bible-Reading Plan**

- Be prayerful as you read the descriptions and consider the resources. Ask God to help you choose an approach that will enable you to experience the Bible and encounter Him in new and fresh ways.
- Tomorrow, you will be invited to choose one of these Bible-reading practices to include in your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan.
- For now, which of these methods seems most appealing to you?

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## DAY 5 | FRIDAY

Did you have enough time to consider each of the Bible-reading practices yesterday? It's a lot of information, no doubt! If you ran out of time this week, take some time now to continue exploring the options.

The next step is to identify one of these Bible practices to include in your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan. While you're trying to make a decision that best aligns with your lifestyle and your goals, it may be helpful to **revisit your vision board**. Think: What do I need most at this time?

- Additionally, it may help you to consider the following:
- If your deepest desire is to know and hear from God, consider **Devotional Bible-Reading** or **Journaling**.
- If you want to grow in your understanding of biblical truth, look into **Bible Study with Others** or **Inductive Bible Study**.
- Curious about the unified story of the Bible, one story that leads to Jesus? Consider the **1-Year Bible-Reading Plan**.
- Or if you long to hold God's truths closer to your heart and your mind, you might try **Memorization**.

When you are ready, fill in the blank:

**AT THIS TIME, I CHOOSE \_\_\_\_\_ AS MY BIBLE-READING PRACTICE.**

On Day 40, you will transfer your Bible-reading practice to your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan. Until then, we'll remind you often of your Bible-reading practice. This may help you to establish a good habit of meeting with God by engaging in Scripture.



To conclude, slowly read the Bible passages below, then respond to the prompt that follows.

The book of Psalms opens with these words: *"Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do."* (Ps 1:1-3)

Jesus says something similar about His own teaching in Matthew 5-7: *"Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock. But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn't obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash."* (Matt. 7:24-27)



Based upon your reading of the passages above, circle the benefits of reading and living out God's Word.

1. My life will bear good fruit.
2. It will help me to be wise.
3. Nothing bad will ever happen to me again.
4. It will help anchor me in the midst of storms.
5. If I apply what I learn from the Bible, it will lead me to experience freedom.

*\*\* If you circled #3 above, go back and read Jesus' words from Matthew 7 again. Jesus doesn't promise there will be no storms. But being firmly planted on the truth of God's promises means we can weather those storms. In John 16:33, Jesus said that in this world, we will have trouble. But because of Jesus, we can have peace even while facing trouble.*

## DAY 6 | SATURDAY

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### REFLECTION DAY

Are you ready to get started in your new Bible-reading practice?

Gather whatever you need and find a quiet place. Be still before God. Thank God for meeting with you. Ask God to help you as you get started. Ask Him to make the Scriptures come alive for you in a new way. Now, follow your Bible-reading practice. Feel free to use the space on this page to make any notes from your experience.

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When you are done, ask God to help you remain aware that He (and His words) are going with you throughout your day. Close in prayer.

## DAY 7 | SUNDAY

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Today, you may follow your Bible-reading practice. Or, you may simply rest in the knowledge of God's incomprehensible love for you.

This can also be a grace day to allow you to get caught up from any days you missed this past week.

FIND THE WORSHIP PLAYLIST FOR THIS WEEK ON PAGE 8

# DAILY GUIDE

days 8-14

This daily guide is to be used every day  
this week to work your personal plan.

## DAY 8 | MONDAY

*“So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: **Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering.** Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for Him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. **Readily recognize what He wants from you, and quickly respond to it.** Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.”<sup>14</sup>*

Rom 12:1-2, *The Message*

This paraphrase of the Apostle Paul’s words accurately sums up what sustaining rhythms help you do: **Fix your attention on God.** As you arrange your life around a set of key spiritual practices, you will be better equipped to embrace the life God has in mind for you and extend that life to those around you.

By selecting a Bible-reading practice, you took the first step in developing your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan. As you continue to develop your plan, you’ll see daily prompts to practice the spiritual habits you have chosen. This will help you to establish a daily routine of making time to be with God.



Starting tomorrow, you’ll be invited to consider a spiritual practice of prayer to include in your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan.

- For today, gather what you need to engage in your Bible-reading practice, and when you’re ready, simply get started.

Enjoy your time with God!



## DAY 9 | TUESDAY

In the 1990s, international marketers made a few cross-cultural communication gaffes with brand slogans.

- In China, the Kentucky Fried Chicken slogan, “Finger-lickin’ good” got translated as “Eat your fingers off!”
- In Taiwan, the Pepsi slogan, “Come alive with the Pepsi generation” was translated as “Pepsi will bring your ancestors back from the dead.”
- A Miami t-shirt maker printed shirts for the Spanish-speaking market promoting the Pope’s visit. Instead of stating “I Saw the Pope” in Spanish, the shirts translated as “I Saw the Potato.”<sup>5</sup>

Communication can be tricky, can’t it? But effective communication can do more than sell a product and service.

**Good, clear, honest communication opens the door to great relationships. When we don’t communicate well with those we live, work and worship with, we can easily drift apart.**

The same is true about our relationship with God. **God is relational and invites us to interact with Him through prayer.** When we aren’t making time to pray, we begin to drift away from the intimacy God desires to have with us.

Like a loving Father, God invites His children to spend time with Him. He wants to remind us of who He is: *“Be still and know that I am God”* (Ps 46:10).

God wants to take away our worries and give us peace: *“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”* (Phil 4:6-7)

He speaks to us and invites us to follow and obey: *“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”* (John 10:27)

*Day 9 continues on next page...*



## DAY 9 | TUESDAY

These passages remind us of the unparalleled privilege of interacting with the God who created the universe; the God who loves us immeasurably and wants to guide us each day into life as He intends for it to be lived. We all desire this, right? Sometimes, though, **desire simply isn't enough.**

It may be that you've found it difficult to pray. *You're not alone.* It could be that you just haven't found a way of communicating with God that fits well with how God made you. Or maybe you can consider new ways of interacting with God so your relationship doesn't grow stale.



Think about how you relate to others. You don't relate in just one way, do you? You take turns talking and listening; you laugh, cry, engage in debate, share your dreams and make decisions together. Similarly, learning how to communicate with God in a variety of ways is critical to a healthy, growing and intimate relationship.

Tomorrow, we'll begin to explore some ways to nurture better prayer experiences. But, as you wrap up today, take a few minutes to respond to the following questions.

- What are your current prayer habits?

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- How would you describe the health and quality of your interactions with God through prayer?

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- Look back at your vision board. What are some words you included to characterize the type of prayer life you want to have? Feel free to add words that capture your heart's desire.

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Use the remainder of your time to engage in your Bible-reading practice.



# DAY 10 | WEDNESDAY

**“Prayer means yearning for the simple presence of God, for a personal understanding of His Word, for knowledge of His will and for the capacity to hear and obey Him.”<sup>6</sup>**

~ Thomas Merton

In one sense, prayer really is this beautiful and simple, and we should be careful to not overcomplicate it. Yet there are many who have found prayer difficult and have struggled to nurture a thriving prayer life.

Part of what makes prayer challenging is that—unlike in human interactions—when we meet with God, there isn’t a physical being in the room with whom we can see and interact with. The silence of prayer can easily create space for our minds to wander or for doubts to creep in. Are you really listening, God?

For these reasons, men and women throughout history have been helped by trying out different patterns of prayer. A prayer pattern is simply a guided process that gives structure to prayer and helps you stay focused during your time with God.



Today, you will explore a few patterns for connecting with God in prayer. You can find descriptions and printouts of these patterns on the Growth Plan Resources page:

[northviewchurch.us/grow](http://northviewchurch.us/grow).

On the Growth Plan webpage, you’ll find the following patterns for prayer:

- Intercessory Prayer**
- Listening Prayer**
- Praying Scripture**
- Fixed-Hour Prayer**
- The ACTS Prayer Method**
- Fasting**



- As you consider each pattern for prayer, ask God to lead you to an approach that will help you encounter God in a fresh and life-giving way.
- Tomorrow, you will be invited to choose one of these patterns for prayer to include in your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan. Looking at the list above, circle the ones you are currently drawn to explore more.
- You're encouraged to close this time by engaging in your

## DAY 11 | THURSDAY

Bible-reading practice.

*"The Lord is close to all who call on Him, yes, to all who call on Him in truth."*

Ps 145:18

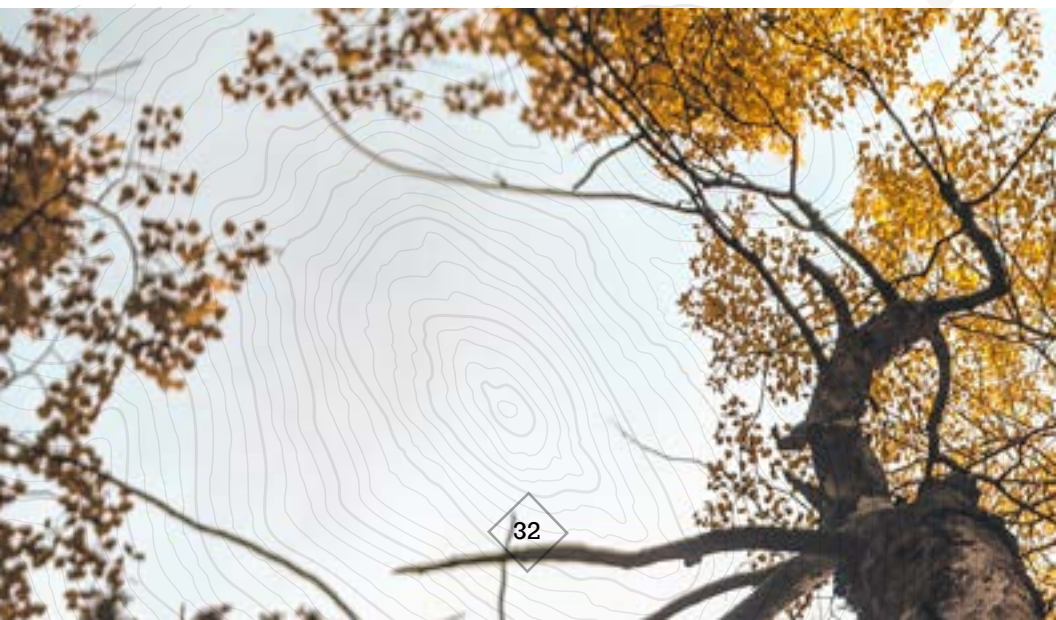
Yesterday, you were presented with six patterns for prayer. If you didn't have time to look through them all, take some time now to continue exploring.

Do you sense God nudging you toward one of these patterns? Or, perhaps you have a way to pray that works well for you, one that you'd like to continue utilizing. Whatever the case, when you are ready, fill in the blank:

***I CHOOSE \_\_\_\_\_ AS THE PATTERN FOR PRAYER  
I'D LIKE TO PRACTICE IN THIS SEASON.***

As with the Bible-reading practice, you'll transfer your pattern for prayer to your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan by the time we reach Day 40. Until then, you will see prompts each day to pray using the pattern you've chosen. This prayer will accompany the time you spend engaging in your Bible-reading practice each day.

Week by week, you will add other sustaining rhythms. And





throughout each week, you'll be encouraged to practice these new rhythms, as well as to reflect on how it's going.

As you develop your Growth Plan, **you may find that the particular practices/patterns you've chosen aren't working well for you.** Be encouraged not to ditch these new practices too soon. Give it time.

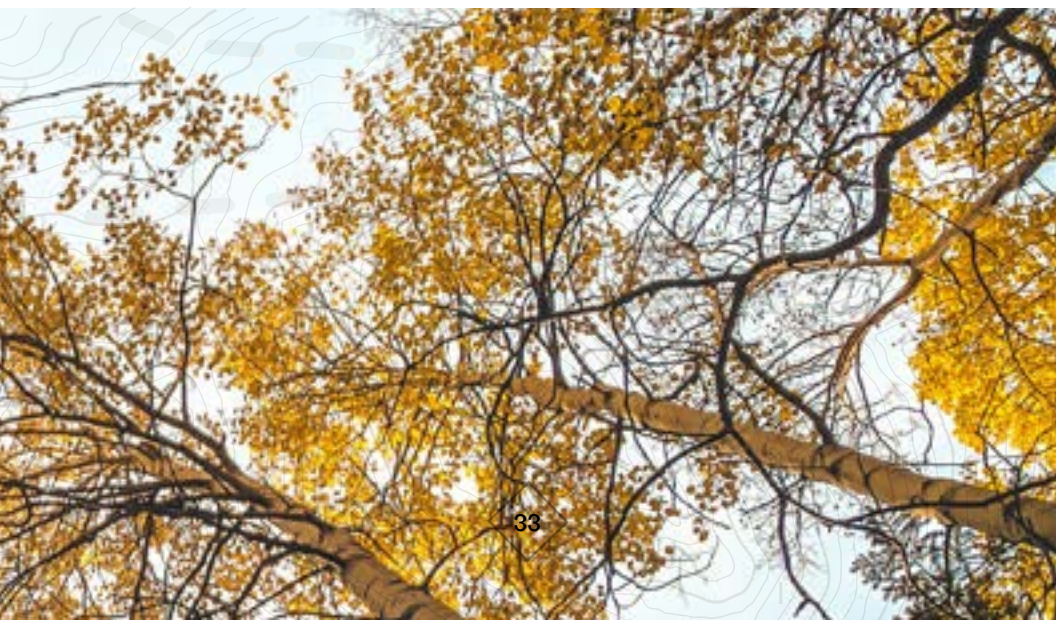
Eating healthy foods, exercising and going to bed at a reasonable hour aren't always choices you might enjoy making, but sometimes those are precisely the choices you need for a healthy lifestyle. Spiritual habits can function in a similar way.



However, if you continue in your practice and find that you still struggle to get through a practice, it's OK to choose something different. Ultimately, the patterns/practices you choose should be *life-giving* for you—though not always easy.

- As you have just selected a pattern for prayer, take some time now to give it a try. Be sure to pair it with time engaging in your Bible-reading practice.

May you experience the closeness of God's presence during this time.



## DAY 12 | FRIDAY

\_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

You are just twelve days into developing your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan and you've already made some really important decisions about how you will spend time with God through His Word and in prayer.

Hopefully, you're excited about meeting with God through these practices. **Be sure to revisit your vision board regularly.** Keeping the vision in front of you helps you stay motivated to make the effort and carve out the time, even when you aren't feeling it.



- Collect what you need to read your Bible and pray today.
- As you wrap up this week of thinking about encountering God through prayer, it seems fitting to conclude your time by reciting the prayer Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew 6:9-13:

*"Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.  
For yours is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
forever.  
Amen."*



## DAY 13 | SATURDAY

\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Gather whatever you need for your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Find a quiet place and be still before God.

Thank God for meeting with you. Ask God to help you as you get started. Ask Him to make the Scriptures come alive for you in a new way. Ask Him to make His presence real to you through prayer. Now, begin.

Feel free to use this space to capture notes regarding your experience so far.

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When you are done, ask God to help you remain aware that He is going with you throughout your day.

# DAY 14 | SUNDAY

## Grace Day

Today, you may follow your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Or, you may simply rest in the knowledge of God's incomprehensible love for you.

This can also be a grace day to allow you to get caught up from any days you missed this past week.



FIND THE WORSHIP PLAYLIST FOR THIS WEEK ON PAGE 8

# DAILY GUIDE

days 15-21

This daily guide is to be used every day  
this week to work your personal plan.



## DAY 15 | MONDAY

Throughout the Bible, we find many accounts of God's people coming together regularly to participate in a worship service.

Those "services" in the Old Testament looked very different than they did in the time of the early church and church today. Moses and the folks he guided through the desert for 40 years didn't stop once a week to sing songs, listen to someone preach and pass a collection plate.

They had a tent, called a tabernacle, where the priests performed various ceremonies (Ex 29:44-46), including ones to seek forgiveness for their sins by offering sacrifices (Ex 30:10). And inside that tent was a golden chest called an ark. Think Indiana Jones, not Noah. This ark signified God being with His people. Later, when the Israelites had settled in the Promised Land, King David planned to build an elaborate temple in Jerusalem (2 Sam 7). His son, King Solomon, ended up building the temple though (1 Kings 6), and for centuries, Jewish believers traveled to this temple to worship God. The tent, and later the temple, were where God interacted with His people.

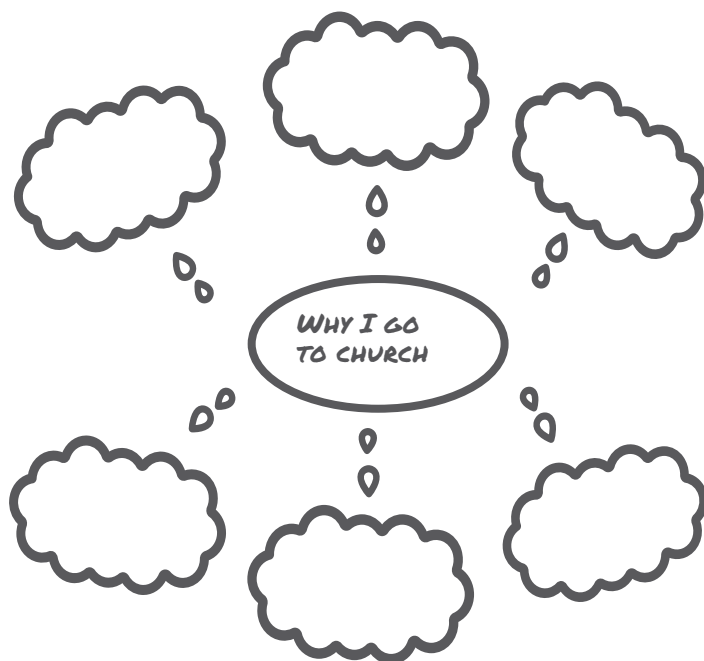
But then came Jesus. John tells us that **Jesus lived among us** (John 1:14). In other words, Jesus' body became the tabernacle and the temple, the place where God met His people and dealt with their sins (John 2:21-22). Jesus both fulfilled and replaced the old-covenant requirements (2 Cor 1:20). Because Jesus became the lamb sacrificed for us (Rev 12:11), we don't bring animals to church (thank goodness!) to be sacrificed for our forgiveness. Since God's Spirit now lives in us (John 14:16-17), we are a *living sacrifice* to God (Rom 12:1-2).

After Jesus' death and after He ascended to heaven, **it became a custom for Jesus' followers to get together weekly to read and preach Scripture** (1 Tim 4:14), to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Eph 5:18-19; Col 3:16), to pray (1 Tim 2:1-2, 8), to celebrate baptism and communion (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor 11:17-34) and to encourage one another to love and do good deeds (Heb 10:24-25).

Participating in weekly worship services is a spiritual habit handed down to us through many generations since the time of the church in New Testament times. **But why, 2,000 years later, do we still come together for a worship service?** And what is it about going to church that sustains us as we follow Jesus? These are the questions we will explore this week as we consider the formational potential of participating in a worship service.



To stimulate your thoughts on this subject, jot out the reasons why you go to church in the space below:



We'll pick up this theme again tomorrow. For now, keep at it with your Bible-reading and prayer practices. Gather whatever you need and find a place where you won't be distracted. Acknowledge God's loving presence with you.

Soak up your time with God!

## DAY 16 | TUESDAY

Yesterday, you listed some of the reasons why you go to church. Today, take a moment to read through the following words from the Apostle Paul to an early church in Ephesus, a city near modern-day Istanbul, Turkey.

As you read, circle or underline everything that provides an answer to the question, **“Why should I go to church?”**

*“Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.*

*Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” (Eph 4: 11-16)*



To be equipped and built up as Christ's followers, to come to unity, to grow in maturity, to know the truth, to speak truth in love, to become more like Christ and to do our part to help others to grow. **This is such a gripping vision of what could happen as we engage both as worshipers and as learners,** and as we invest in the lives of our fellow disciples.



We'll look more closely at those themes in the days to come. For now, turn your attention to your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer.

- Open your heart to all that God desires to speak to you through His Word and in prayer. May you sense the nearness of God's presence during this time.

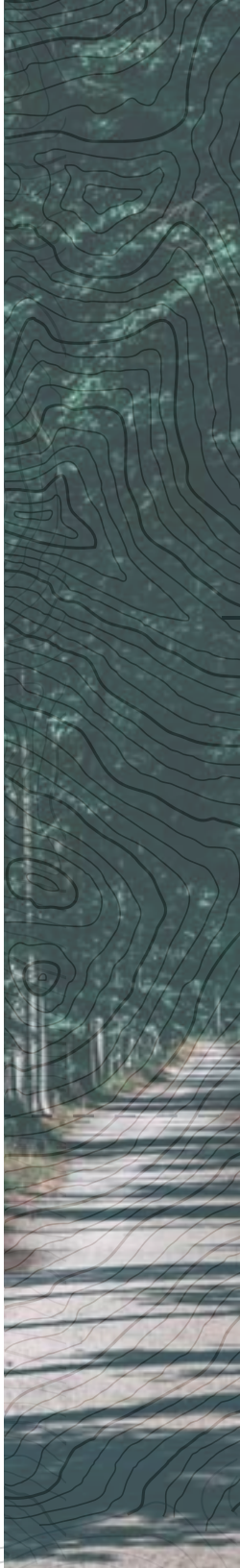
## DAY 17 | WEDNESDAY

Have you ever considered how peculiar it is that we sing when we gather together as the Church? Nowadays, public singing is a pretty uncommon practice. Unless we're joining baseball fans in a rendition of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." We might also sing along at a music concert. But we don't sing at PTO meetings or city council meetings. We don't usually sing at weddings or at commencements. **Public singing is something unique to the Christian church.**

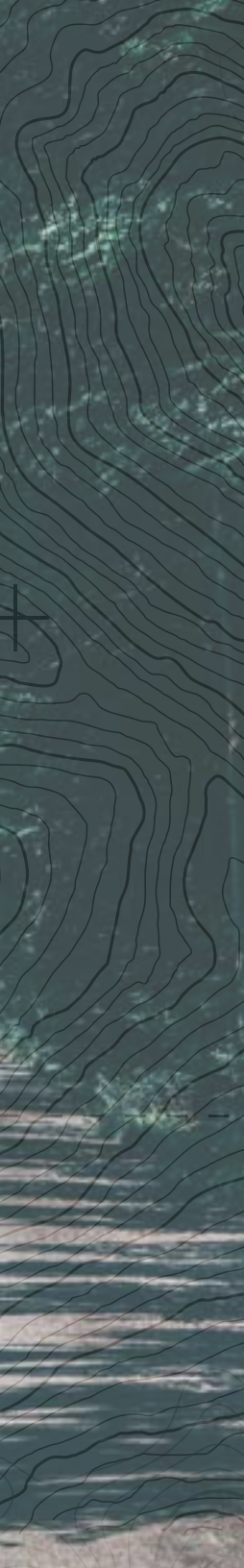
In Colossians 3:16, we find that we're actually instructed to sing: *"Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts."*

But that's not the first time we encounter public singing in the Bible. In addition to stories of individuals singing, Moses and the people of Israel sang a song after their deliverance from the Egyptians at the Red Sea (Ex 15:1-19). Afterward, Moses' sister Miriam led the women in dancing and singing the same song (20-21).

The psalms, of course, were the songs Israel sang, either in temple worship, as families or alone with God. They were also intended to be sung en route to Jerusalem to keep the pilgrimage feasts (Ps 120-134). Centuries later, Jesus' brother James even encouraged us to sing psalms when we are happy (Jas 5:13).







**Even Jesus and His disciples sang** after taking the last supper (Matt. 26:30). The hymn they sang would have been what Jewish believers used at the Passover celebration for centuries: Psalms 113-118.

And so we sing. We sing songs reminding us of God's character and faithfulness. We sing songs that express what we believe. We sing passages from the Bible. We sing songs to God, expressing our adoration and gratitude.

The truth expressed in the lyrics along with poetry, the emotion and the rhythm of the music stays with us through our days in a way that other forms of communication simply don't.

### **That's why music is powerful.**

Sure we can each experience the power of worship on our own. We can stream our favorite worship music and sing in the car. Avoid the messiness and inconvenience of church.

But look again at the Colossians passage. Right in the middle are two words that are vital to understanding these instructions: one another.

**Each week, we have an opportunity to join voices with one another to worship God.**

*Day 17 continued on next page...*

# DAY 17 | WEDNESDAY

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Coming together to raise our voices to God in worship matters. It forms us. That's reason enough to make Sunday worship a weekly habit.

Is there a hymn or contemporary worship song that has been most significant in shaping your faith? What is it about the specific song that speaks to your soul?

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Thinking of the most recent worship service you attended, check all the statements below that are true of your experience.

\_\_\_ I was aware of the words of the songs we were singing.

\_\_\_ I was aware of the gift of learning from and with fellow disciples.

\_\_\_ I was thankful for what God is doing in me.

\_\_\_ In addition to being thankful for what God is doing in me, I felt grateful to God for what He is doing in the lives of fellow disciples in and through Northview Church.

Finally, turn your attention now to your Bible reading practice and pattern for prayer.



## DAY 18 | THURSDAY

It's a running joke at Northview that the first rule of preaching here is that your name has to be Steve. Steve Poe, Steve Arterburn, Steve Carter. We love our Steves and are fortunate to hear from such gifted teachers.

If you wanted to hear a sermon from someone with a name other than Steve, though, you can do so within seconds. Just pull up sermons from around the world via YouTube or podcasts. With access to biblical teachings from around the world just a click away, why not just live off a steady diet of those?

There's nothing wrong with listening to sermons from other pastors. But God places churches within a community, and speaks through pastors and teachers with a message that you and your church need to hear; a unique message meant to encourage, inform, admonish, inspire and instruct you. Us. Northview.







**When we all show up to hear this message with open hearts, God is able to stir our hearts and guide us to become the city on a hill He intends for us to be.**



Which one or two Northview sermons have had the greatest impact on your formation?

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How have you seen God use the preaching here to shape and guide us as a church?

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Solid, biblical instruction molds us as one church body. Worshipping God together forms us. Tomorrow, we'll consider one more important reason we should make a habit out of participating in a weekly worship service. But now, you are encouraged to simply read your Bible and pray.



## DAY 19 | FRIDAY

*"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near." (Heb 10:24-25)*

This is a great passage for our time as other activities take priority over worship, and many people lose sight of the value of going to church. What do you observe the author of Hebrews emphasizing regarding why we gather together? (Here's a hint: It gets mentioned twice.)

One another. As pointed out before, these two words bring a much-needed perspective to our understanding of worship.

**It's easy to think only of what we can get out of a worship service, rather than thinking of what we can contribute of ourselves.** Imagine what our shared experience of a worship service would be like if the entire church showed up looking for ways to welcome, encourage, affirm and/or pray for one another. **It's possible that the presence of Jesus would be even more palpable in our church as we experience His love through one another.**

This week, we looked at the role of the weekly worship service to sustain us in our discipleship.

We found this to be true:

Coming together in **one voice** to worship God

+ **listening** to God's message uniquely intended for our church

+ **gathering** to extend the presence of Jesus to one another

**= a powerful, formative experience!**

The worship service is a communal spiritual habit that God uses to both shape individual disciples, as well as shape the church as a whole. **A worship service loses most of its formative power when our attendance is sporadic or when we just go through the motions.**

Our hearts are best postured for God to work in us when we show up to be fully engaged worshippers, actively listening for the Spirit and looking for ways we can be the presence of Jesus to one another.



Circle a response below that best describes your commitment to weekly worship:

I am fully engaged when I come to the Sunday worship service.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Never                  Rarely                  Sometimes                  Often                  Always

I am aware of God’s guiding message to me and to our church.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Never                  Rarely                  Sometimes                  Often                  Always

I am looking for ways to extend the presence of Jesus to folks around me.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5  
Never                  Rarely                  Sometimes                  Often                  Always

Ask God to speak to you about one way you can be more actively engaged during the weekly worship services.

***IN THIS SEASON, I SENSE GOD LEADING ME TO \_\_\_\_\_***

In light of your answer to the above prompt, consider making a commitment to making one change for the remainder of this Growth Plan.

***I COMMIT TO \_\_\_\_\_***

Begin putting this commitment into practice at the Northview worship service this very weekend!

For now, though, you are encouraged once again to turn your attention to your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. May you sense God’s nearness to you as you open your heart to meet with Him.

## DAY 20 | SATURDAY

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Gather whatever you need for your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Find a quiet place and be still before God. Thank God for meeting with you. Ask God to help you as you get started. Ask Him to make the Scriptures come alive for you in a new way. Ask Him to make His presence real to you through prayer. Now, begin.

Feel free to use the space on this page to make any notes of your experience.

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When you are done, ask God to help you remain aware that He is going with you throughout your day.

## DAY 21 | SUNDAY

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Today, you may follow your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Or, you may simply rest in the knowledge of God's incomprehensible love for you.

This can also be a grace day to allow you to get caught up from any days you missed this past week.



FIND THE WORSHIP PLAYLIST FOR THIS WEEK ON PAGE 8

# DAILY GUIDE

days 22-28

This daily guide is to be used every day  
this week to work your personal plan.

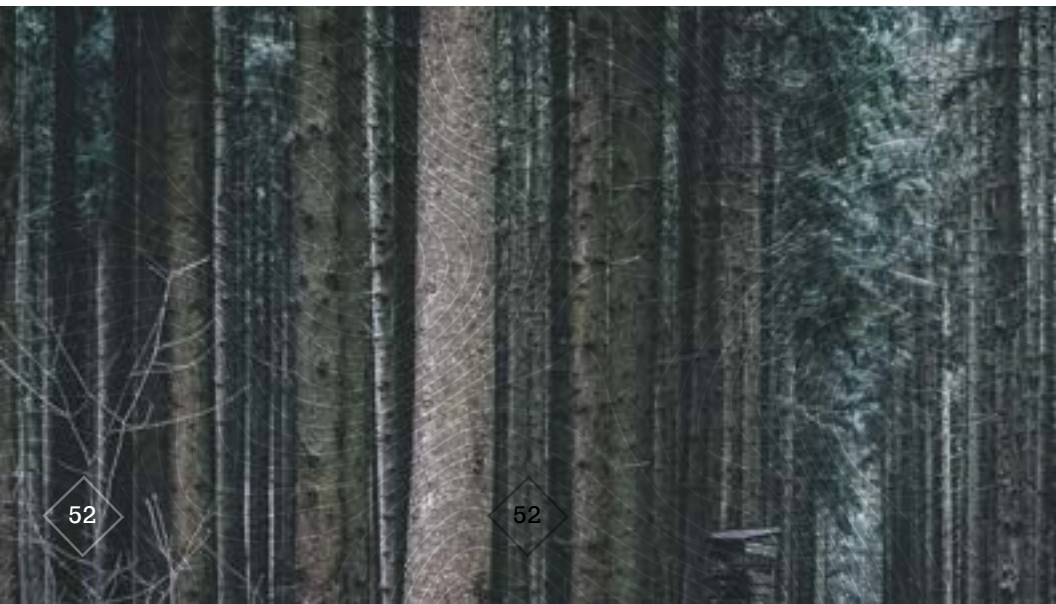
## DAY 22 | MONDAY

How are you feeling today? As you begin a new week, take a quick inventory of how you feel physically, mentally and emotionally. From the list of words below, circle the ones that most accurately capture how you feel, or feel free to add one or two of your own.

Energized	Fatigued	Refreshed	Overwhelmed
Drained	Strong	Exhausted	Curious
Focused	Anxious	Calm	Distracted
Indifferent	Courageous	Inspired	

Have you ever noticed how your physical, mental and emotional well-being has a direct impact on your spiritual well-being? It's simply how God wired you. **You are a creature with multiple dimensions—you have a will, a mind, a body and a soul.**

In order for you to function at your best, it's imperative that you pay attention to every part of yourself. For that reason, the focus of your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan this week is about God's intention for us to have healthy patterns of rest. Indeed, **rest is a spiritual habit.**







But first, a look back:

This past weekend, were you able to participate in a worship service? If so, were you more purposeful and present? Did you practice the change you committed to last week? Use the space below to journal any thoughts about the worship service.

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As you begin your week, take time to engage in your Bible-reading practice and pattern for prayer. Ask God to make you aware of His presence and to reveal His heart to you as you spend this time focused on conversing with God.



## DAY 23 | TUESDAY

**“The number one enemy of Christian spiritual formation today is exhaustion.”**

Wow. Powerful statement, isn't it? Author James Bryan Smith goes on to say:

“The human person is not merely a soul housed in a body. Our bodies and souls are unified. If our bodies suffer, so do our souls. We cannot neglect the body in pursuit of spiritual growth. In fact, neglecting our bodies necessarily impedes our spiritual growth. Everything we do in our lives, including the practices of spiritual formation, we do in and with our bodies. If our bodies are not sufficiently rested, our energies will be diminished and our ability to pray, read the Bible, enter solitude or memorize Scripture will be minimized.”<sup>7</sup>

**Not only does a lack of rest have a negative impact on our spiritual habits; it also puts a strain on our ability to love others well** — including giving our best to family. Being overtired also limits our ability to serve tirelessly.



Yesterday, you were invited to reflect on how you feel physically, mentally and emotionally. The amount of rest you're getting impacts all of these dimensions, likely more than you realize.

Do you feel that you are getting the rest you need to be at your best and represent Jesus well? Take a moment and respond to the following questions about your current patterns of rest.

How many hours of sleep did you get last night?

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When you woke up, how did you feel? (Circle the most appropriate description.)

Depleted      Meh!      Fine      Good      Energized

**E** |||||  ||||| **F**

Complete these statements:

**I FELT THIS WAY BECAUSE** \_\_\_\_\_

**TO FEEL MORE ENERGIZED TOMORROW MORNING, I COULD**

How much time do you set aside each week to engage in non-work-related activities that are enjoyable and rejuvenating for you? Mark on the line where you land in terms of time to relax and be refreshed.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Less than  
an hour  
a week

Perhaps  
two hour  
a week

Up to  
four hours  
a week

Up to  
5 hours  
a week

More than  
5 hours  
a week

I am rested enough to give my best to work, family, service and nurturing spiritual habits.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

We'll explore this need for rest as a sustaining rhythm some more tomorrow. Please take time now to get with God through your Bible-reading plan and your pattern for prayer. May you experience the nearness of God's presence as you do.

## DAY 24 | WEDNESDAY

There seems to be an endless number of research studies and news coverage showing how essential rest is for our well-being. What do these studies prove?

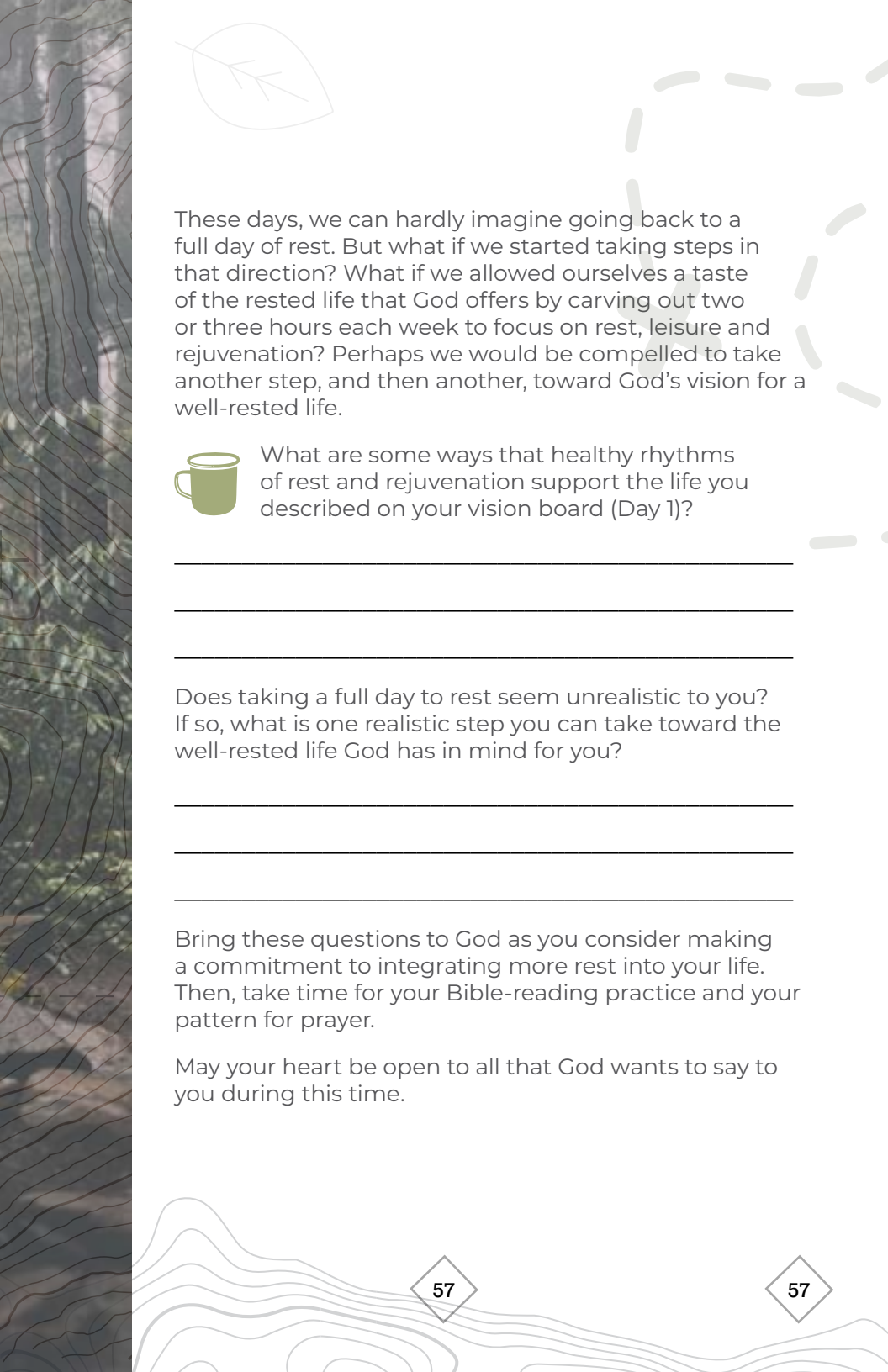
*God was right all along.*

God knew from the time He created humankind that rest would be essential to our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. **After all, we were created in God's image, and God rested** after he had finished His work of creation. God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy (Gen 2:2-3). In doing so, God essentially says, "I made the whole world in six days but took the seventh to rest, setting an example for you."

This day of rest was considered so central to humankind's well-being that God included a command to rest among the laws He gave Moses. Right alongside "do not murder" and "do not steal," God issued the Sabbath command, that we all take a day each week to rest (Ex 20:8-11).

It's important to understand God's reason for issuing a command like this one. This wasn't a heavy-handed rule or an arbitrary hoop to jump through. **After all, who better to tell us how life works best than the God who created life?**

But keeping a set of rules became more important to religious leaders than obeying God's greatest command: to love our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus caused quite a stir when He and His disciples picked food to eat on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:2), and when He healed on the Sabbath, too (Luke 13:10-17; Mark 3:1-6). Yet Jesus also rested (more about that tomorrow), just as God had rested after the creation. This is why the writer of the book of Hebrews reminds us, **"There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from His. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest."** (Heb 4:9-11a)



These days, we can hardly imagine going back to a full day of rest. But what if we started taking steps in that direction? What if we allowed ourselves a taste of the rested life that God offers by carving out two or three hours each week to focus on rest, leisure and rejuvenation? Perhaps we would be compelled to take another step, and then another, toward God's vision for a well-rested life.



What are some ways that healthy rhythms of rest and rejuvenation support the life you described on your vision board (Day 1)?

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Does taking a full day to rest seem unrealistic to you? If so, what is one realistic step you can take toward the well-rested life God has in mind for you?

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Bring these questions to God as you consider making a commitment to integrating more rest into your life. Then, take time for your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer.

May your heart be open to all that God wants to say to you during this time.



# DAY 25 | THURSDAY

\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

When we reflect on the need to integrate the sustaining rhythm of rest into our lives, we're not just considering run-of-the-mill, garden variety kind of rest. Sure, there's nothing inherently wrong with this type of relaxation, and disconnecting from the demands of work is crucial. But the restorative and rejuvenating rest that God intends for us includes an invitation to be with Him.

Consider Jesus' words: *"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. **I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace.** I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."* (Matt. 11:28-30, The Message)

That sounds like an offer that's too good to pass up, doesn't it?

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Imagine Jesus standing before you and locking eyes with you, personally extending that invitation to rest. Would you take it? You'd be crazy not to! The reality is that this invitation is for you, for today.

The idea is not to return to a legalistic keeping of the Sabbath. Jesus said, after all, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27). Jesus took time to rest, though, regularly stepping away from the crowds (Mark 4:35-36, 6:31-32).

To keep the Sabbath means to gladly choose to try different practices in order to find the rest Jesus offers us. Even if you don't see how you could possibly commit to a full day of Sabbath rest, there are certain Sabbath practices that can help you embrace Jesus' invitation and learn His "unforced rhythms of grace."



Read through the list below, then circle one or two practices that seem appealing to you.

- **Plan.** Ahead of time, plan how you'll spend your time of rest. Plan an activity that is both restful and enjoyable.
- **Take a break.** Turn off your phone for the duration of your rest.
- **Disconnect.** Give yourself a break from all screens: laptops, phones, tablets and television. To help with this, you can join the movement by signing up for a digital sabbath at [digitalsabbath.io](https://digitalsabbath.io).
- **Be intentional.** Each time you begin your Sabbath time, ask God to help you remain aware of His presence with you as you rest.
- **Create a rhythm.** Some people like to light a candle, read a psalm, sing a worship song or practice a similar ritual to acknowledge God's presence and mark the start of their Sabbath. Consider closing your Sabbath time with a ritual as well. One way to conclude a Sabbath might be sharing a meal with family or friends and giving thanks to God together.

Are you getting a vision for how Sabbath rest (even just a few hours each week) can be a way to experience the rest-filled and life-giving presence of Jesus? Give this thought and prayer as you prepare to decide how to include rest in your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan.

Now, go ahead and turn your attention to your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Open your heart to all that God desires to speak to you through His Word and in prayer.

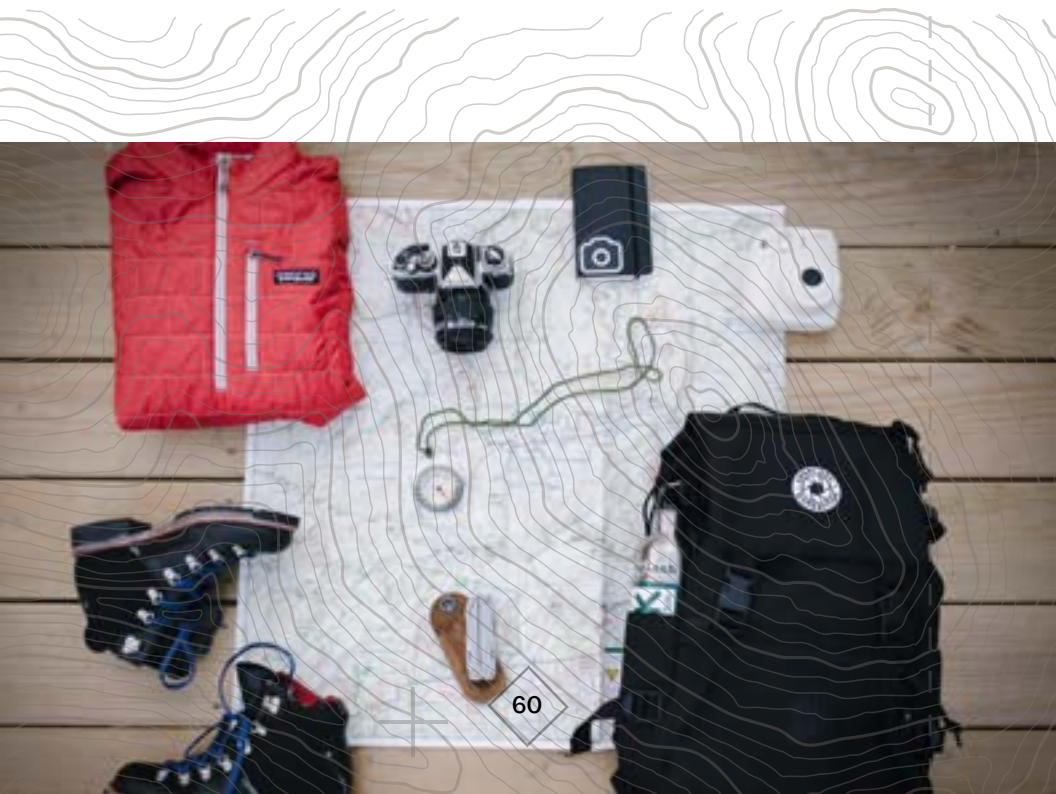
May you feel the nearness of God's presence in this time.

## DAY 26 | FRIDAY

The focus this week has been on our need to incorporate rest as one of our sustaining rhythms of discipleship. When we are physically, mentally and emotionally rested, our souls are better prepared to love well, serve wholeheartedly and reflect Jesus accurately in all we say and do.

The Gospels tell us that Jesus gave His all to teach, serve and heal. The Gospels also tell us that Jesus lived within His human limitations and found rest in God: He got tired (John 4:6), slept (Mark 4:37-38), made time to be alone with God (Matt. 14:23) and practiced Sabbath rest (Luke 4:16; Mark 2:28).

**If we are going to follow Jesus and seek to be more like Him, we need to follow Him into healthy rhythms of rest and rejuvenation.**





What one or two changes to your rhythms of rest are you feeling led to make in this season? Perhaps you need to get to bed a bit earlier, so that you have sufficient energy and mental acuity to accomplish all God gives you to do. Or perhaps you recognize the need to incorporate some kind of weekly Sabbath rest into your routine.

Take a moment to bring this before God and then write your commitment to rest below.

***I RECOGNIZE THAT GOD INTENDS FOR ME TO ENTER INTO SUSTAINING RHYTHMS OF REST. THEREFORE, I GLADLY COMMIT TO \_\_\_\_\_***

- This kind of sustaining rhythm may require some planning on your part. Otherwise, it will be easy for the demands of life to sabotage your good intentions. In the space below, jot down some activities you find both restful and enjoyable.

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- Choosing just one of the items on your list, plan how you can make it happen. For example, "On Saturday mornings, I'll leave my phone in my bedroom and cook breakfast for my family. After breakfast, we'll go someplace nearby and take photos. Every week, we'll decide on a rejuvenating post-breakfast activity for the following week."
- Consider sharing your commitment with someone and ask them to hold you accountable.
- Dedicate time now to your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer.

May God open your mind and heart to all that He has for you in this time.

## DAY 27 | SATURDAY

Many at Northview have followed the Growth Plan to help guide their discipleship journey. Here is one story to encourage you on your journey.

### **PERSEVERING THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES WITH THE GROWTH PLAN**

As we learn to be more like Jesus, we gain new perspectives on our hardships.

Carmel Campus attendee Dr. Sheila Triplett recently walked through a challenging season riddled with ongoing health concerns, grief from losing multiple family members in one year and financial difficulties from taking care of her mother. As she navigated the struggles, Sheila felt like she was taking one step forward and two steps back. Then Northview introduced the Growth Plan.

“The Growth Plan was a much-needed spiritual, emotional and psychological addition to my daily devotion and faith walk during a challenging season of transition,” Sheila says.

The Growth Plan was a constant reminder for Sheila to turn back to the Word every day. She learned to pray for God’s will in her life – “HIS will, not mine,” she says. The Growth Plan has been a refinement of her faith and a reminder that discernment from the Lord is coming.

“I have learned to come to the Lord without the expectations of ‘help me,’ ‘do this,’ ‘fix me,’” Sheila says. “Jesus is not our spiritual bellhop. Everything happens in His perfect timing.”



Hopefully, the Growth Plan is helping you, too, as you turn back to the Word and seek God’s will through prayer.

Dedicate time now to your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer.





# DAY 28 | SUNDAY

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## GRACE DAY

Today, you may follow your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Or, you may simply rest in the knowledge of God's incomprehensible love for you.

This can also be a grace day to allow you to get caught up from any days you missed this past week.

FIND THE WORSHIP PLAYLIST FOR THIS WEEK ON PAGE 8

# DAILY GUIDE

days 29-35

This daily guide is to be used every day  
this week to work your personal plan.

## DAY 29 | MONDAY



Today begins week five of developing your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan. You've made a lot of important decisions and commitments the past four weeks, and you'll be invited to make another this week. Before moving forward, take some time to reflect on what you've developed so far. Here are a few questions to consider:

### BIBLE-READING PRACTICE

In the first week, you chose a Bible-reading practice. In what ways has that been a helpful way for you to engage with Scripture and connect with God?

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Have you been consistent with being in the Word? If not, don't beat yourself up. It takes time to develop a new habit. Far from being disappointed in you, God is always glad to meet with you and His mercies are new every morning (Lam 3:22-23). So, choose to make a fresh start today.

If you haven't gotten traction with the Bible-reading practice you selected, it's OK to go back to Day 4 and select a different type of practice. Feel free to use the next two weeks to explore a different practice and then decide what you want to include in your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan.

### PATTERN FOR PRAYER

In the second week, you selected a pattern for prayer. In what ways has that been a helpful way for you to interact with God?

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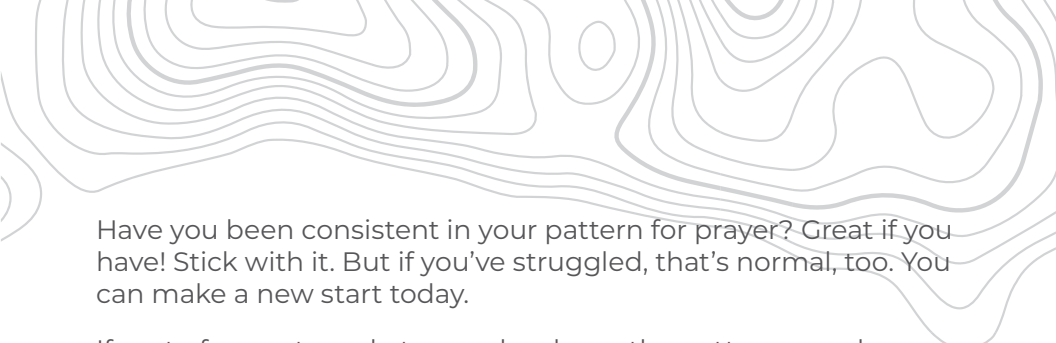
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Have you been consistent in your pattern for prayer? Great if you have! Stick with it. But if you've struggled, that's normal, too. You can make a new start today.

If part of your struggle to pray has been the pattern you chose, feel free to explore a different one. Go back to Day 10 and consider some of your other options. Select another pattern you want to try for the next two weeks.

## **WORSHIP SERVICE**

During the third week, we explored some of the key reasons we gather to worship. You were invited to make a commitment to be a more engaged participant and/or to contribute something of yourself to others.

What have you done differently at the past two worship services to lean into your commitment? What has changed about your worship service experience as a result?

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## **REST**

Last week, we looked at our need to experience physical, mental and emotional rest so we can love well, serve wholeheartedly and reflect Jesus more accurately in all we say and do.

Sustaining rhythms of rest are built into God's plan for human flourishing—from God's example of taking a day to rest after Creation, to the ways Jesus modeled resting. You were invited to make one or two changes to your own rhythms of rest.

How are you doing so far? Did you take a full or partial Sabbath-rest sometime during your week? If so, what was that experience like? Are you resting in other ways?

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## DAY 30 | TUESDAY

Some of the most popular television shows of the past few decades have centered around tight-knit friendships: Cheers, Seinfeld, Friends, The Big Bang Theory. They're fictional shows, of course, and they tend to ignore or trivialize the hard realities of life. But the deeply committed, do-life-together relationships that these programs feature stir in us a desire for a loving community of our own. Sadly, many of us settle for *watching* good relationships rather than pursuing them.

The truth is, friendships where we know and are known, where we love and are loved and where we serve and are served are hard to come by. In fact, **we really don't "come by" the best relationships. Instead, we work hard at them.**

We share, we hurt, we get hurt, we forgive, we support, we misunderstand, we show grace. But the work is worth it. Why? **Because we aren't meant to live alone and isolated.** Rather, we were created to know the satisfaction and delight of loving community. In fact, the Bible tells us that we are made in the image of God and God is, literally, relationship: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; three, yet, somehow, one. **We are hard-wired for relationship.**

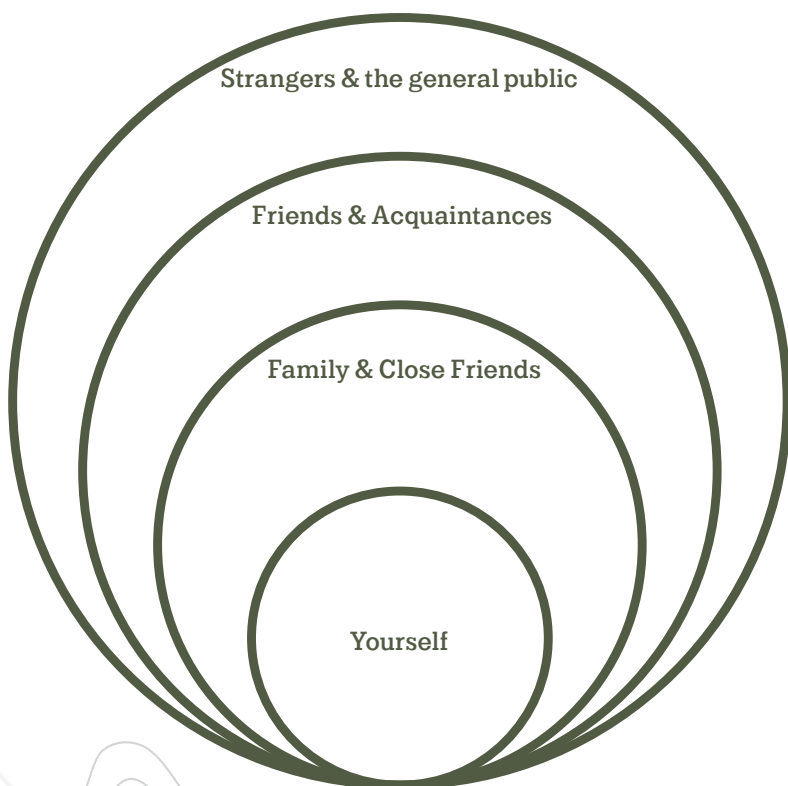
If we say "no" to engaging in the work of developing meaningful relationships, we close ourselves off to the very existence that God intends for us. Pastor John Ortberg, in his brilliantly-titled book, *Everybody's Normal Till You Get To Know Them*<sup>8</sup>, says the following about community:

"To live and contribute to God's dream of community is the reason you were born. It is what you were created for. Neglect this, and it doesn't matter what else you do.... Neglect this, and you will die a failure. Devote yourself to this one task, to loving 'as-is people,' and no matter what else you may not achieve, you will lead a magnificent life."



Take a moment to reflect on the relationships in your life. Who are the people Go.d has put in your path to know, love and serve? Fill in the names of friends in each of the circles below.

## **FRIENDSHIP CIRCLES**



Day 30 continued on next page....

## DAY 30 | TUESDAY

Looking at the names on the previous page, ask yourself:

In general, are my relationships growing stronger and deeper? Or have they stagnated? Am I growing closer to the folks who know me well, or are we drifting apart?

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What are your hopes and desires for the most important relationships in your life? (Be specific. Write the names and what you desire for each of those relationships.)

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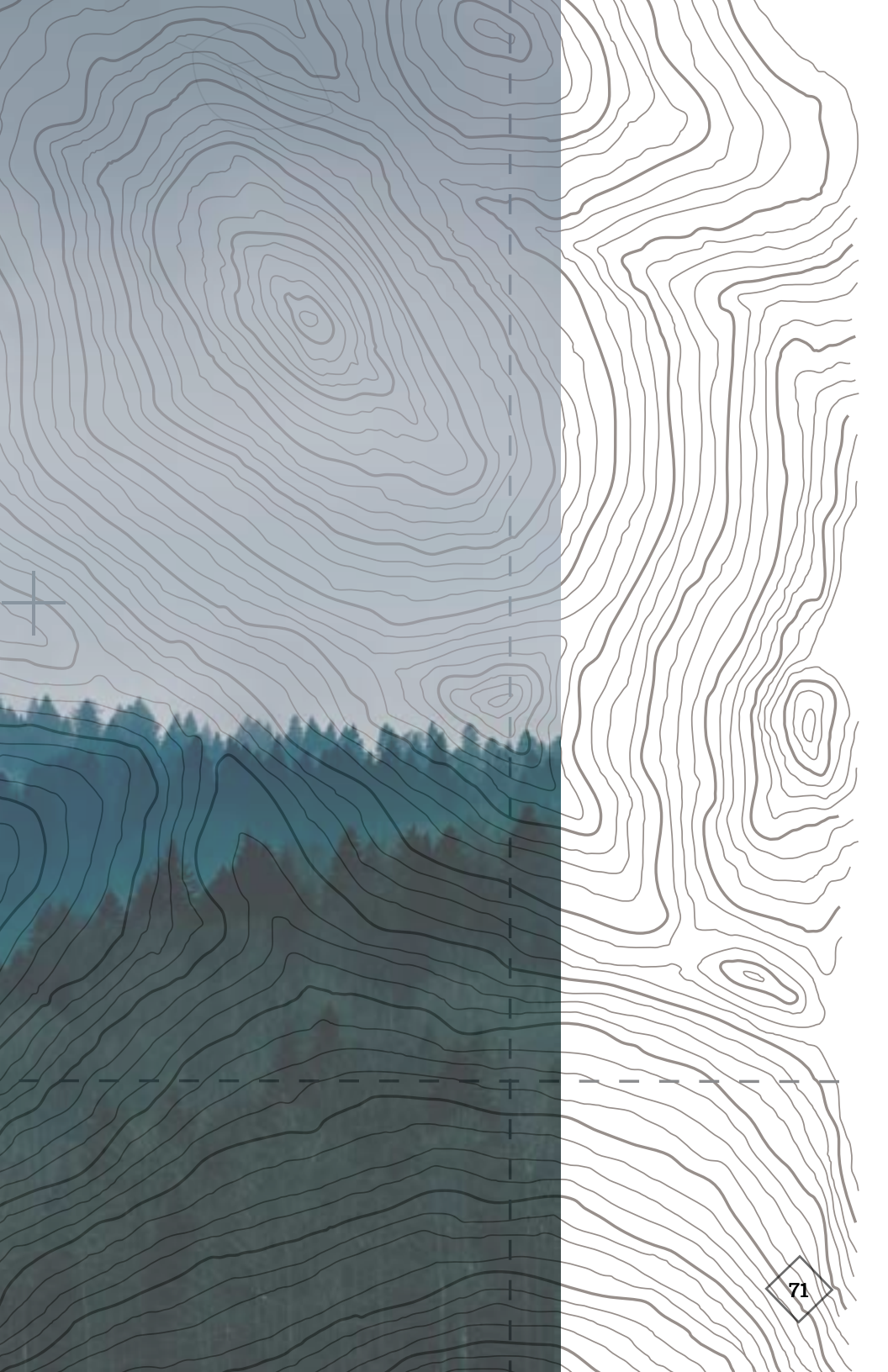
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Through the remainder of this week, we'll continue to explore our need to include relationships as one of our sustaining rhythms. For now, turn your attention to your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer.

Open your heart to receive whatever God has for you in this time.





## DAY 31 | WEDNESDAY

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Anyone who's seen the giant redwood trees in the Western U.S. knows those trees are majestic. They can stretch up to 350 feet into the sky, yet their roots go down only five or six feet. Instead of growing deep, their roots grow wide. They find their strength by intertwining with the roots of nearby redwoods.

Like these magnificent trees, we, too, can find strength and support as we intertwine our lives with those of other disciples. A significant part of the New Testament includes instructions for Jesus-followers to nurture healthy, intertwining, God-honoring relationships.

In fact, there are 59 “one another” passages in the New Testament—including forgiving one another, encouraging one another, praying for one another, serving one another and more. Just like the redwoods need other trees in order to thrive, we need believers around us to strengthen one another *in our* faith.

As we learn to forgive, support, serve and encourage one another, we discover that our roots expand even wider. We become more strongly rooted as we grow up together in Christ-like maturity.

There are a number of ways we can be intentional about nurturing discipleship relationships, so that we can experience maturity and help others to do the same. Here are a few worth considering. Feel free to write the names of friends in your life who either play these roles in your life already, or potentially could.





**Accountability Partners** | Accountability partners commit to the mutual sharing of struggles and temptations, and give permission to one another to ask hard questions, challenge, encourage and pray for one another.

Curious to know more? Howard Closs's book, *Christian Life Accountability Program*, is a helpful guide.

**Spiritual Friendships** | In a spiritual friendship, friends gather for the purpose of sharing about their relationship with God. The friends commit to listen, encourage, support and pray for one another. Another name for these kinds of friendships is **Training Partners**. In the Stretching Practices portion of this Growth Plan (Day 43), you'll learn more about Training Partner relationships.

Want a deeper look? A helpful resource for you might be the book *Spiritual Friendship* by Mindy Caliguire.

**Life Groups** | A Life Group consists of 8 to 14 people who gather together regularly for relationship, study, prayer and service. If you're not in a Life Group, you can join one at Northview by visiting [northviewchurch.us/groups](http://northviewchurch.us/groups).

- Give some thought and prayer to these forms of discipleship relationships. If you don't have one of these (or something similar) in place, what would it look like for you to add it your sustaining rhythms?
- Turn your focus now to your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer.



Become aware of God's loving presence with you and open your heart to all that God has for you in this time.

## DAY 32 | THURSDAY

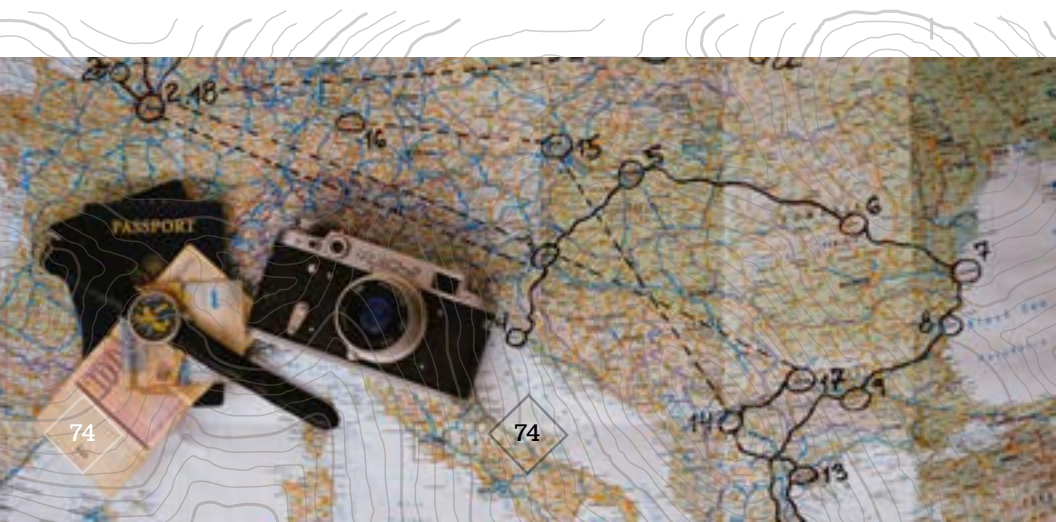
Another important set of discipleship relationships are those right where we live. The people who live with us provide us with ample opportunities to know and be known, serve and be served, love and be loved. And even if we live alone, we have folks in our inner circle who could provide similar growth opportunities.

No matter our living arrangements, the relationships right at our doorstep are packed with potential to help us grow in Christlikeness. Yet, **in order to tap into that growth power, we have to be intentional.**

In the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy, Moses relays God's instructions to the children of Israel for being deliberate at home:

*"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."* (Deut 6:4-9)

This passage highlights God's emphasis on the critical role of relationships in closest proximity to us to help us grow in our awareness of God's purposes as we spur one another on to love.





Take a moment and consider the prompts below. With the passage from Deuteronomy in mind, invite God to show you how you might integrate a simple change in all of the home/close community relationships that apply to you. Feel free to present these questions to those with whom you live or who are in your innermost circle so that you can brainstorm together.

If you're married, what might you do to partner with your spouse in following Jesus? (Stuck for ideas? Consider praying together daily, reading and discussing the Bible or a different Christian book, or commit to simply encouraging one another daily.)

If you're a parent, your children look to you to teach them and model Jesus' ways. What are one or two small changes you can introduce to encourage discipleship in your home? (Check out Northview's *Family Framework* at [northviewchurch.us/familyframework](http://northviewchurch.us/familyframework) for ideas.)

If you're living with your parents, consider chatting with them and/or the rest of your immediate family about ways you can encourage one another in your faith.

If you're sharing space with a roommate, what would it look like for you to set aside time each week to connect as roommates for a spiritual conversation or to pray for one another?

If you live alone, what can you do to reach out to family and/or close friends to engage in intentional spiritual conversations? If you have nephews and nieces, for example, what can you do to deliberately build closer relationships with them so you can talk about issues surrounding faith?

Hopefully, these questions stimulate your imagination. Continue to bring these questions to God in prayer throughout your day. Tomorrow you will be invited to name the way you will lean into discipleship relationships to help sustain you in this season. For now, take time to get with God through your Bible-reading plan and your pattern for prayer.

May you experience the nearness of God's presence as you do.

## DAY 33 | FRIDAY

**“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” ~ Prov 27:17**

When you read this passage, what tool comes to mind? An axe, perhaps? An axe is the sort of tool that cannot be effective unless it is regularly sharpened. It doesn't simply reach a state of usefulness and stay there. If continually used and not sharpened, it grows duller and less effective with each chop. Though it takes time to stop and sharpen an axe, it is far more effective in achieving its purpose when regularly sharpened.

**Sharpening an axe is an apt metaphor for our need for relationships to sustain us in our discipleship.** Following Jesus can be hard. If we aren't in a community where we are mutually supported, challenged, equipped and where we can serve, pray and be prayed for, we will not be able to experience life as God purposed for us. And we'll miss out on the joy of playing that same role in others' lives.

The reality is that establishing the kind of relationship where discipleship occurs takes time. Those relationships can be difficult. They can be messy. But the work is worth it. **We were made for relationship.** We are better when we work at growing deep relationships.



As you consider our shared need for intentional discipleship relationships to sustain you, which relationships do you sense God prompting you to engage more deeply in?

Perhaps you have existing friendships that could simply become more intentional. For example, a group of friends that commit to a Spiritual Friendship (see Day 31).

Or maybe you have been living somewhat isolated and need to open yourself to the love and support of a Christian community. Getting connected to a Life Group would be a great next step to take. **Visit [northviewchurch.us/next](http://northviewchurch.us/next) to start connecting.**

It could be that you've been operating on autopilot at home, and you recognize the opportunity to better support, serve, equip and love those closest to you. What would it look like to engage in some spiritual habits at home to sustain one another as you each follow Jesus?

Write your commitment to a sustaining rhythm of intentional discipleship relationship below.

**TO SUPPORT OTHERS AND BE SUPPORTED IN MY  
DISCIPLESHIP, I COMMIT TO (TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTION)  
\_\_\_\_\_ IN MY RELATIONSHIPS WITH  
(THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE) \_\_\_\_\_.**

If you haven't done so already, reach out and initiate a conversation with those you named above. Discuss what you would like to do to help sustain one another in your discipleship journey.

As you think about your sustaining rhythm of rest, have you made plans for how you will spend that time? If not, take a moment now and craft a plan to prepare for your time of rest.

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Finally, turn your attention to your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Ask God to make you aware of His presence and help you hear His voice clearly through His Word and through the whispers of the Holy Spirit.



## DAY 34 | SATURDAY

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Gather whatever you need for your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Find a quiet place and be still before God. Thank God for meeting with you. Ask God to help you as you get started. Ask Him to make the Scriptures come alive for you in a new way and to make His presence real to you through prayer.

Now, begin. Feel free to use the space on this page to make any notes of your experience.

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When you are done, ask God to help you remain aware that He is going with you throughout your day.

## DAY 35 | SUNDAY

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Today, you may follow your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Or, you may simply rest in the knowledge of God's incomprehensible love for you.

This can also be a grace day to allow you to get caught up from any days you missed this past week.



FIND THE WORSHIP PLAYLIST FOR THIS WEEK ON PAGE 8



# DAILY GUIDE

days 36-42

This daily guide is to be used every day  
this week to work your personal plan.

## DAY 36 | MONDAY

**“We are never more like Jesus than when we are serving Him or others. There is no higher calling than to be a servant.”<sup>9</sup>**

~ Nancy Leigh DeMoss

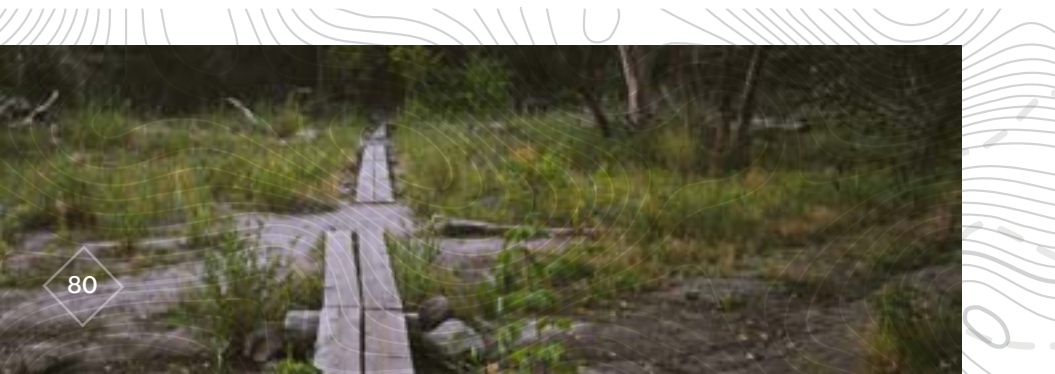
Though this quote has been attributed to author Nancy Leigh DeMoss, we are regularly reminded of it by Pastor Steve. If the chief end of discipleship is to be more like Jesus, then it seems the best way to get there is by rolling up our sleeves, throwing a towel over our arm and offering ourselves in service to others. This is, quite literally, the example given to us by Jesus.

We read the account of Jesus washing the feet of His disciples in John 13. It's truly remarkable that the Lord of creation would stoop down and wash the smelly, dirty feet of humanity. Yet, Jesus didn't do this for the show but to set an example for His followers to model.

Jesus says, *“And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.”* (John 13:14-15)

What we discover as we read the account of the early church in Acts and other New Testament letters is that they did just as Jesus instructed: They partnered with God and one another to engage in a lifestyle of service. **They recognized that, in fact, they would never be more like Jesus than when they were serving.**

With that in mind, it would be entirely pointless to design a Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan for discipleship without including a rhythm of serving others. In the next three days, we will consider what it means for us to serve inside and outside of the church and identify a way to integrate serving into our regular rhythms of discipleship.





Take a moment to reflect on the ways you regularly serve others.

How are you serving those inside the church?

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How are you serving those in your community, school, workplace and beyond?

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What are some ways serving has sustained or strengthened your own discipleship?

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And now, keep true to your Bible-reading and prayer practices. Collect whatever you need and find a place where you won't be distracted. Acknowledge God's loving presence with you.

Delight in your time with God!



## DAY 37 | TUESDAY

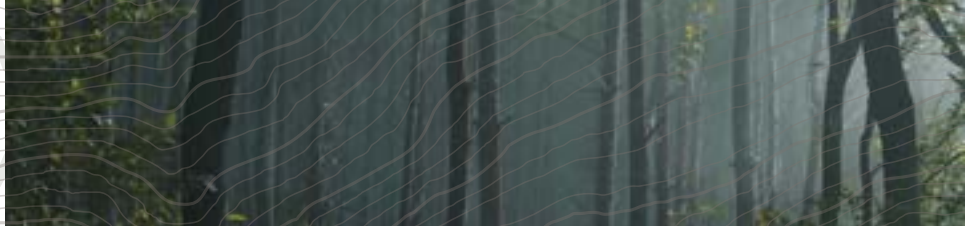
One of the Apostle Paul's favorite metaphors to describe the Church is to equate it to the human body. Paul saw the Church as the living and active body of Christ, with individuals functioning as various parts, (1 Cor 12:12-31). In a letter to the church in Corinth, Paul even uses humor to illustrate his message, envisioning body parts—feet, ears and eyes—talking to one another (1 Cor 12:14-21). Paul's message was clear: **Each of the parts of the body needs to serve one another in order for the body to be whole and healthy.**

Paul writes a similar message to the church in Ephesus, calling on them to serve one another. Using the body metaphor, he writes, "[God] *makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.*" (Eph 4:16)

This encouragement for the members of the church to use their gifts in service to one another wasn't just a theme of Paul's letters. The Apostle Peter also urged the church to embrace the opportunity to serve one another. In 1 Peter 4:10, he writes, "*God has given each of you a gift from His great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.*"

Whether we live in first-century Ephesus or 21st-century Indiana, **the body of Christ is at its best when every member of the church body is doing his/her part to serve the rest of the body.** Imagine if everyone with the gift of encouragement was encouraging others? Or if everyone with the gift of helps was offering assistance to those in need in the body? What if everyone with the gift of intercession was praying? And if everyone with the gift of administration was helping keep the body organized and working together?





If every member of the body of Christ at Northview followed Paul and Peter's instructions to serve, Northview would be the most radiant expression of the church you could find. Why? **Because we are never more like Jesus than when we are serving God and others.**



Take a few moments to respond to the following questions.

Serving others with your gifts clearly benefits those on the receiving end of the service offered. But how does it sustain you in your discipleship?

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Who are some of the people in your past or present church experience whose gifts helped you to grow?

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How are you currently using your God-given gifts to serve those in the church?

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If you're not currently serving the body of Christ with your gifts, consider joining a Team at Northview. Grab a copy of the Groups & Teams brochure at the Guest Services desk at your Northview Campus, or visit [northviewchurch.us/next](https://northviewchurch.us/next) to learn more.

Dedicate time now to your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer.

## DAY 38 | WEDNESDAY

The parable of the Good Samaritan. It's arguably the most well-known of Jesus' teachings. Found in Luke 10, this was Jesus' response to a question by an expert in religious law: *"If God requires that you love your neighbor as yourself, then who is your neighbor?"* (Luke 10:29)

Jesus tells of a Samaritan who comes to the aid of a Jewish man who has been brutally beaten, robbed and left for dead. To be clear, the Jews and Samaritans despised one another, but in Jesus' story, the Samaritan makes significant personal sacrifices to serve this Jewish stranger.

Jesus' message was clear: Your neighbor is anyone—even your enemy—who comes across your path with a need. **Loving your neighbor means doing whatever is within your power to serve them.**

This theme of serving those in need is prevalent throughout the Old and New Testaments. One Old Testament example is when the prophet Isaiah relays this message from God to His people:

*"No, this is the kind of fasting I [God] want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free and remove the chains that bind people. Share your food with the hungry and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them and do not hide from relatives who need your help" (Isa 58:6-7).*

Hundreds of years later when Jesus comes on the scene, He puts God's heart of service on display by how He lives (healing the sick, feeding the hungry, washing His disciples' feet) and through what he teaches. One of Jesus' most profound teachings on serving is in Matthew 25, where He connects our acts of serving others to serving God:

*"I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothes to wear. I was sick and you*



*took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.' Then those who are righteous will reply to Him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you, or naked and give you clothes to wear? When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' Then the King will reply to them, 'I assure you that when you have done it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me.'" (Matt. 25:35-40)*

Imagine a world where every follower of Jesus actively sought opportunities to serve the hungry, those who thirst, the stranger, the lonely, those who lack clothing, the sick and those in prison. God would work powerfully through us to be the answer to the prayer Jesus taught us to pray: *"May your kingdom come and your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"* (Matt. 6:10).



So, who has God placed along your path? How are you currently serving them?

Remember, **you are never more like Jesus than when you are serving God and others.** Is there anyone you sense God leading you to serve? What would it look like to love them as you love yourself?

Dedicate time now to your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. May God open your mind and heart to all that He has for you today.



## DAY 39 | THURSDAY

In 1991, Northview Pastor Mark Crull and his wife, Karen, were on staff with Campus Crusade for Christ. That summer, Mark and Karen led a group of college students on a retreat in Yellowstone National Park. They spent their week at Ranger Lake with plans to fish the lake for their meals.

While setting up camp, Mark noticed that Ranger Lake was different from other lakes he had fished that summer. The other lakes were clear, while Ranger Lake was dark with thousands of lily pads lining the perimeter. Sadly, despite hours spent fishing, the team didn't catch a single fish.

After they had concluded their retreat, Mark visited the ranger station to report their fishing woes and seek answers. The park ranger informed Mark that Ranger Lake was a dead lake; only leeches and bugs are able to survive in it. The ranger explained that Ranger Lake only had water flowing *into* it. In order for a lake to sustain life, it also needed to have water flowing *out* from it.

The spiritual parallels are obvious. We all need spiritual practices like Bible study, prayer, rest, worship services and discipleship relationships. These allow spiritual nutrients to flow into us. Yet, **to sustain us in our life of discipleship, we also need to have the life and love of God flowing out of us. We do that by serving others.**



For your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan, who do you sense God leading you to serve and how will you serve them?

**AT THIS TIME, I COMMIT TO SERVE (THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE)** \_\_\_\_\_

**IN THE FOLLOWING WAY(S):** \_\_\_\_\_

Turn your attention now to your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Ask God to make you aware of His presence and help you hear His voice clearly through His Word and through the whispers of the Holy Spirit.



## DAY 40 | FRIDAY

**“I cannot transform myself, or anything else for that matter. What I can do is create the conditions in which spiritual transformation can take place, by developing and maintaining a rhythm of spiritual practices that keep me open and available to God.”<sup>10</sup>**

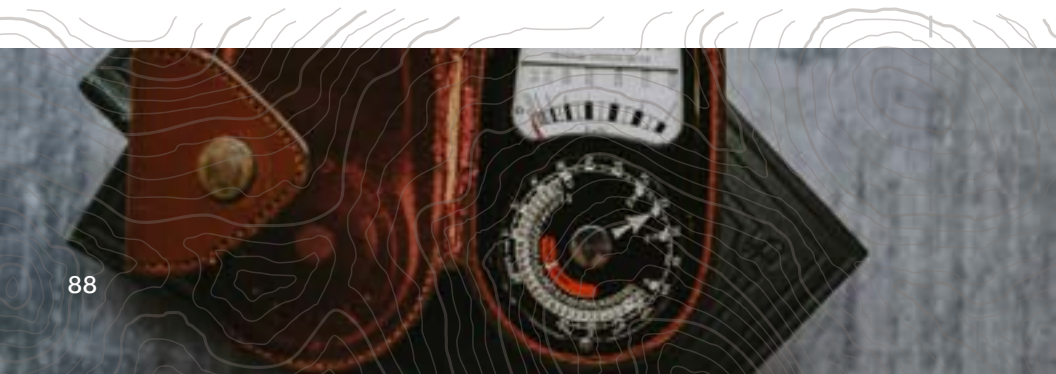
~ Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms*

On Day 1, you were invited to develop a vision board; to prayerfully reflect on what you truly desire in your relationship with God and others, and to place words and/or pictures on your vision board to represent those desires. Getting clear about what you envision was an essential first step toward the life God has for you. Take a moment to review the vision board you created.

Once your vision was clear, you began to prayerfully select spiritual habits that would set you on a course toward your God-given vision.

Today, you will bring all of those spiritual habits together to create your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan. It is recommended that you commit to your sustaining rhythms for (at least) the duration of this Growth Plan. After continuing to practice these sustaining rhythms for the next 50 days, reevaluate. Which rhythms are life-giving ones you want to continue to practice? Are there any that have you stuck in a rut? If so, replace them with new ones. Then, review and update your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan. Make a fresh commitment for another thirty, sixty or ninety days. Continue to review, revise and repeat. **The key is to stick with sustaining rhythms that lead you into a life-giving relationship with God and others.**

Are you ready? Let's write your plan!



## SUSTAINING RHYTHMS GROWTH PLAN

With God's help, I commit to the following spiritual habits to sustain me in my relationship with God and others:

### BIBLE-READING PRACTICE (DAY 5)

**I CHOOSE \_\_\_\_\_ AS MY  
BIBLE-READING PRACTICE.**

### PRAYER PATTERN (DAY 11)

**I CHOOSE \_\_\_\_\_ AS THE PATTERN FOR  
PRAYER THAT I WILL PRACTICE IN THIS SEASON.**

### WORSHIP SERVICE (DAY 19)

**TO BE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THE WORSHIP SERVICE, I  
SENSE GOD LEADING ME TO \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.**

### REST (DAY 26)

**I RECOGNIZE THAT GOD INTENDS FOR ME TO ENTER INTO  
SUSTAINING RHYTHMS OF REST. THEREFORE, I GLADLY  
COMMIT TO \_\_\_\_\_.**

### RELATIONSHIPS (DAY 33)

**TO SUPPORT OTHERS AND BE SUPPORTED IN MY  
DISCIPLESHIP, I COMMIT TO (TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTION)  
\_\_\_\_\_ IN MY RELATIONSHIPS WITH (THE  
FOLLOWING PEOPLE) \_\_\_\_\_.**

### SERVICE (DAY 39)

**AT THIS TIME, I COMMIT TO SERVE (THE FOLLOWING  
PEOPLE) \_\_\_\_\_  
IN THE FOLLOWING WAY(S): \_\_\_\_\_.**

Day 40 continued on next page...

## DAY 40 | FRIDAY

Now that you've written your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan, offer it up to God. Consider praying the following prayer of commitment:

*Faithful God, I thank you for journeying with me these past 40 days. Would you continue to grow my desire to walk with you and to become more like Jesus? Please help me stay true to the spiritual habits of this Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan, trusting that these habits open my life to a greater awareness of your loving presence and participation in your good purposes for the world. I love you. I need you. I commit this Plan to you now. Amen.*

### TAKING YOUR NEXT STEP

At the beginning of this Growth Plan, we compared spiritual fitness to physical fitness. To function at your best, you need healthy eating habits, you need to exercise regularly and you need sufficient rest. Likewise, we found that in your journey with God, you need sustaining rhythms like those you outlined on the previous page. These rhythms keep you attuned to God and connected to the Church.

Just like there are times when you have to step up your game in order to achieve specific physical goals (maybe you begin a customized exercise regimen to prepare for a race), the same can be true in your spiritual life. During those times, you don't abandon your sustaining rhythms; you build on them.

It could be that God is inviting you to grow in compassion, to surrender a stubborn part of your will, to discover and/or better use your spiritual gifts or to learn to share your faith in a new way.

For you to grow spiritually, it helps to first have a solid spiritual wellness plan in place—that is, your sustaining rhythms. Once those are in place, you are set to identify particular practices to target your growth area. Here, we call those stretching rhythms.

**Practicing both sustaining rhythms and stretching rhythms with the help of the Holy Spirit can bring about real change in you.**

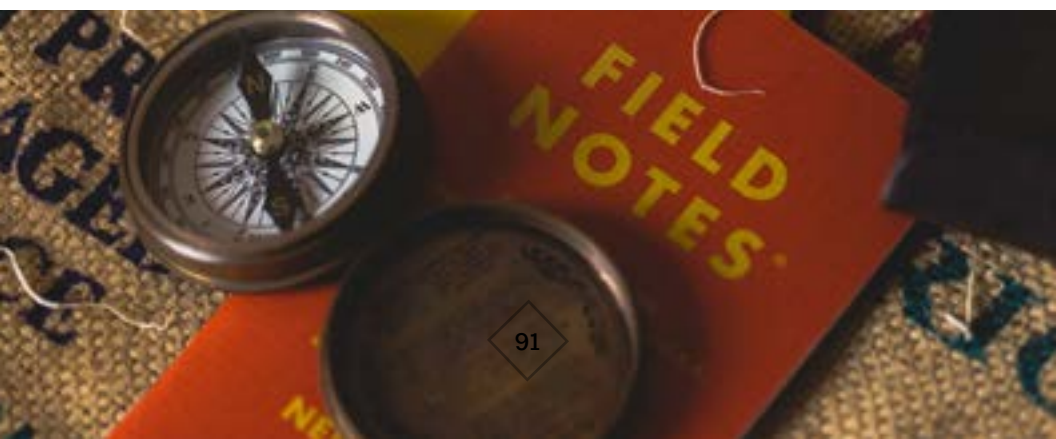
The Apostle Paul modeled such a targeted and disciplined approach to growing. In 1 Corinthians 9, he writes:

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore, I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.” (1 Cor 9:24-27)

An aimless approach to discipleship growth nearly always leads to frustration and failure. **While you cannot manipulate and control growth, you can arrange your life around practices God can use to transform you.**

The Stretching Rhythms Growth Plan is designed to help you with that. In the course of the next 10 days, you will be invited to take a discipleship self-assessment. You'll be provided with resources to help you grow, including a Training Partners discussion guide and a day-by-day guide to help you reflect and journal as you continue on this journey of growth.

Ready to experience what God has next for your discipleship journey? Then keep going! Take the foundational work you've done with your sustaining rhythms to start developing your Stretching Rhythms Growth Plan. The Stretching Rhythms journey begins on Monday.



# DAY 41 | SATURDAY

Many at Northview have followed the Growth Plan to help guide their discipleship journey. Here is the story of someone's experiences with Stretching Practices.

## THE COUPLE THAT PRAYS TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER

The Growth Plan instills an important prayer habit in the Masters' marriage.

The Growth Plan is designed to be worked over and over – it's not a one-and-done resource. Binford Campus member Mike Masters appreciates how the Growth Plan teaches him something new each time he works it.

The first time Mike went through the Growth Plan, he focused on desiring to know God and staying aware of the Holy Spirit's leading throughout each day. Going into the second round, he knew he wanted to build on that foundation, so he chose to focus on sharing God's love through words and actions. "My thought process was if I am really spending time with God, I want people to see that overflow from my life," Mike says.

"A lifestyle change that I implemented with the Growth Plan was every night before bed, I prayed with my wife, Hannah. Now, in the past, we have tried, but a few days or weeks go by and we stop doing it. Looking back now I see that we had no buy-in to the idea of praying together. But during my Growth Plan, we continued to pray together every night, and soon after it started, Hannah would speak up if we had not prayed yet. So, I knew God was with us during my Growth Plan. He wanted us to grow closer together by drawing nearer to Him. Now, do we forget to pray together some nights? Of course we do; we're human. But, it is sweet to see us develop a habit in our marriage that will continue for years."



How is your experience with God through the Growth Plan overflowing into other parts of your life?

Dedicate time now to your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer.



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## DAY 42 | SUNDAY

Today, you may follow your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Or, you may simply rest in the knowledge of God's incomprehensible love for you.

This can also be a grace day to allow you to get caught up from any days you missed this past week.





## HOW DOES THE STRETCHING RHYTHMS GROWTH PLAN WORK?

This Growth Plan is a 48-day journey with God and others as you partner with the Holy Spirit to grow in Christlikeness. This guidebook is designed to guide you, day-by-day, through your Plan.

The first 8 days will help you to listen to the Holy Spirit as you develop your Stretching Rhythms. You will identify a growth area, find some friends to journey with (your Training Partners) and choose some growth practices (spiritual habits, a learning resource and lifestyle changes) to help you grow.

On day 51, you'll begin to work your Plan. Each day provides a reminder to engage in your growth practices and includes reflection questions, a prayer and space to journal about your experience.

At seven-day intervals, you'll see that there are some discussion questions for you to use as you meet with your Training Partners. The format of those Training Partners conversations has been carefully designed to create the conditions for safe and honest discussions that promote growth.

As you begin your Stretching Rhythms Growth Plan, may God surprise you at the ways you hear His voice and are given strength to persevere. And may you become a more accurate reflection of His love to everyone around you.

Blessings on you as you begin this journey!

The background image is a photograph of a narrow dirt path winding through a dense forest. The trees are tall and thin, with their branches reaching upwards. The ground is covered in fallen leaves and some green moss. A thick mist or fog hangs in the air, obscuring the distant part of the path. Overlaid on the entire image is a faint, light-colored topographic map with contour lines. The map lines are more prominent on the left and right sides of the image, while the center, where the path is, is slightly darker. A dark green horizontal band is positioned across the middle of the image, containing the title text.

# STRETCHING RHYTHMS



# INTRODUCTION

## KEY COMPONENTS OF THE STRETCHING RHYTHMS GROWTH PLAN

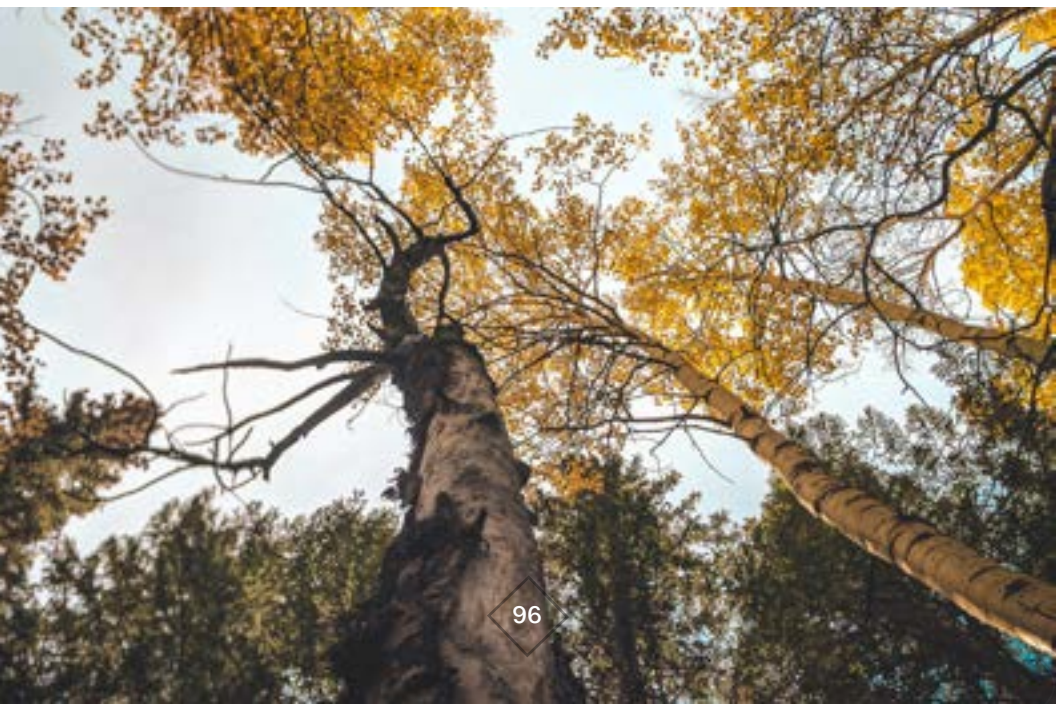
As you follow the process to develop and follow your Stretching Rhythms Growth Plan, you will encounter some recurring themes and concepts that are important to clarify.



**Growth Area:** We all have parts of our life that reflect Jesus and parts that don't. Where we don't reflect Jesus is what we call a Growth Area. Northview has identified a set of attributes from Scripture that synthesize the key qualities of a disciple of Jesus. By prayerfully reflecting on these qualities, you may sense God leading you to your growth area.



**Training Partners:** Training Partners are those who regularly meet together to support each other through their Growth Plans. Reach out to two or three disciples of the same gender and ask them to journey with you. A Training Partner could also be someone who you regard as a Christian mentor.



**GROWTH PRACTICES:** Growth Practices are new practices that we introduce into our daily routine. We offer our Growth Practices to God, trusting that He will work through them to bring about transformation. At Northview, we've identified three Growth Practices that help disciples to submit to God in their whole being (heart, soul, mind and strength). Those include:



**Spiritual Habits:** Spiritual habits are practices that help us to remain connected to God—loving God with all our heart and soul (Mark 12:30). There are many ways to connect with God. If you completed a Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan, then you have already chosen your spiritual habits: a Bible-reading practice and a pattern for prayer.




**Learning Resources:** Jesus challenged us to love God with all our minds (Mark 12:30). As we learn new insights and biblical perspectives through learning resources (books, podcasts, videos, etc.), we are having our minds renewed to God's truth, which is key to our transformation (Romans 12:2).



**Lifestyle Changes:** Jesus told us that it's not enough to hear his teaching; we have to put it into practice (Matthew 7:24). This is what it means to love God with all our strength (Mark 12:30). Once we know our growth area, we can prayerfully plan one or two ways that we will make a lifestyle change, with God's help.







**“Spiritual transformation cannot be orchestrated or controlled, but neither is it a random venture.** We need some kind of support or structure, much as a young vine needs a trellis. We need sails to help us catch the winds of the Spirit. All of us know the frustration of random, haphazard efforts that lead nowhere in spiritual life. We need a plan for transformation.” <sup>11</sup>

**John Ortberg,** *The Life You've Always Wanted*



The background of the entire page is a photograph of a forest with tall, moss-covered trees and a dirt path with wooden steps. Overlaid on this image are thin, white, wavy lines that resemble topographic map contour lines. A dark green horizontal band spans the width of the page, serving as a backdrop for the title.

# DAILY GUIDE

days 43–50

This daily guide is to be used every day  
this week to work your personal plan.

# DAY 43 | MONDAY



## DEVELOPING YOUR PLAN

[growth area]

### INTRODUCTION

In Philippians 1:6, the Apostle Paul writes these words: “And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.” Discipleship is a lifelong process of surrendering the stubborn and selfish parts of our lives to God so that he can exchange them for something better: life to the full (John 10:10). **That means that God is always calling His children to take steps to grow and become more like Jesus (Eph. 4:11-16).**


The first step to growth is to identify where God is leading you to grow. Sometimes that growth area is obvious to us; we can point to a sinful behavior or a selfish pattern that we’ve neglected to address. Other times, it’s not so clear and we need a little guidance to hear God’s voice. Today, you will be led through a process to help you identify your growth area.

### OPENING PRAYER

Begin with a simple prayer, expressing your desire to grow into the image of Jesus. Acknowledge that you are humbly dependent on God to reveal those areas where you need to grow and to bring about that change in you.

### REFLECTION

Reflect for a moment about the most recent events of your life—both the big and the small ones. Think about conversations that made an impression on you. Consider recent sermons or studies where you have felt moved or convicted. Has God been trying to get your attention through any of these ways? What do you think He’s trying to tell you? This is what it means to actively listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit. Make note of your thoughts below.



Now, read through the following qualities of a disciple of Jesus. Pause after each statement and ask God if this is an attribute you need to focus on.

## **DISCIPLES OF JESUS...**

- Desire to know God and stay aware of the Holy Spirit's leading throughout each day.
- Surrender their will to God's will.
- Have healthy relationships within a community of believers.
- Know their gifts and talents and use them to serve others.
- Embrace the Bible as an authoritative guide for their lives and worldviews.
- Model the character of Christ.
- Demonstrate compassion and work to eliminate injustice.
- Are generous with the resources God has entrusted to them.
- Share their faith through their words and actions.
- Equip others to follow Jesus.

Which of these attributes do you sense God nudging you toward?

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*Day 43 continued on next page...*

# DAY 43 | MONDAY

## DISCIPLESHIP SELF-ASSESSMENT

If you need further clarity, Northview has developed a Discipleship Self-Assessment to help you discern your growth area. To take the self-assessment, go to [northviewchurch.us/selfassessment](https://northviewchurch.us/selfassessment). There are 60 questions, and you'll need about 10 to 15 minutes to complete them. As you answer each question, ask God to help you to be honest in your response. When you've finished, respond to the questions below.

### WHAT WERE YOUR TOP THREE AREAS OF STRENGTH/MATURITY?

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How do you see God working through you in your areas of strength / maturity?

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Be sure to give God thanks for the ways He works through your strengths.

### WHAT WERE YOUR THREE LOWEST SCORES/GROWTH AREAS?

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Of the three growth areas, which one stands out more than the others as one to grow in? Write it below.

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Now that you have identified a growth area, the remainder of the week will focus on developing a Growth Plan to help you to experience growth in your growth area. For now, take time to follow your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer.



# DAY 44 | TUESDAY

## DEVELOPING YOUR PLAN [growth practices]

### INTRODUCTION

Have you ever entered into training for an athletic event of any type? A sport or a race? Even if you haven't, you can imagine what it must take for a person to get into physical condition to perform at their very best. In two of his letters, the Apostle Paul compares discipleship to physical training. In one of those letters to a church leader named Timothy, Paul writes,

*"...train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come" (1 Tim. 4:7b-8).*

Effective training is never done in a haphazard way. It requires a plan. And like any training plan, you need to identify practices you will add to your routine in order to experience transformation. The key difference in a spiritual training plan is that the results are not dependent on us, but our effort invites the Holy Spirit to work through our practices. **We work our plan so God can work in us.**

God has been working through a variety of practices to form His people since giving commandments to the people of Israel in the Old Testament:

*"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates" (Deut. 6:4-9).*



For God's people, loving and following after God was more than a "spiritual" act. It involved their entire existence.

Jesus reinforces this truth when he says that the greatest commandment is to "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind*" (Luke 10:27). And Jesus demonstrated His love and obedience to God on all of those levels—heart, soul, mind and strength.

Your Stretching Rhythms Growth Plan will consist of three growth practices: practices that help you address your growth area with your heart (through a spiritual habit), with your mind (through a learning resource), and with all your strength (through a lifestyle change).

When you developed your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan, you chose spiritual habits: a Bible-reading practice and a pattern for prayer. Using the space below, write which Bible-reading practice and prayer pattern that you are following:

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Those spiritual habits will become a part of the Stretching Rhythms Growth Plan that you will write on Day 50. Tomorrow you will select a lifestyle change for your Plan and on Thursday you will identify a learning resource. For now, take time for your Bible-reading practice and prayer pattern. Enjoy your time with God!

# DAY 45 | WEDNESDAY

## DEVELOPING YOUR PLAN

[lifestyle changes]

### INTRODUCTION

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus caps off his teaching with the following story:

*"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash" (Mt 7:24-27).*

To live wisely, we must take action on Jesus' teaching by doing what He says, becoming the kind of people He has in mind. This requires deliberate change in our lives, hence the invitation to make a lifestyle change.

Think for a moment about the particular reason that God led you to focus on your growth area. **With God's help, what lifestyle change could you make over the course of the next 45 days that God could use to change your life forever? Perhaps it's something God is asking you to stop doing.**

Or maybe it's a new habit God is inviting you to develop. Jot down any initial thoughts below.

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## RESOURCE TOOL

For ideas and examples of lifestyle changes for your particular growth area, go to [northviewchurch.us/grow](http://northviewchurch.us/grow), click on Get My Resources and respond to the questions there. Click submit and then click on Lifestyle Changes to see a list of ideas and examples.

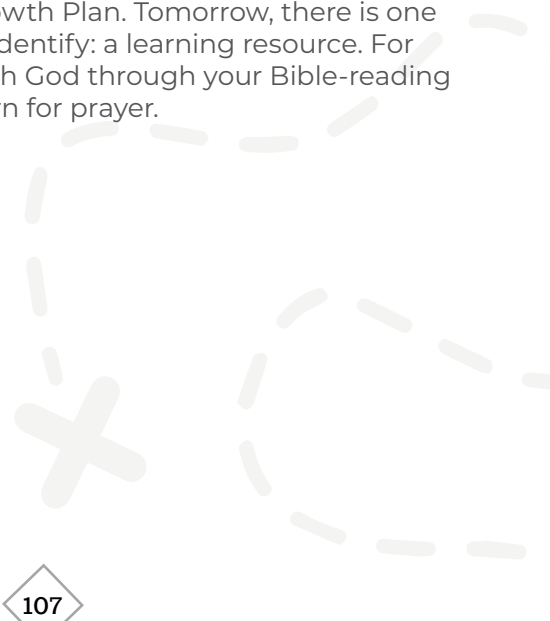
## CHOOSING YOUR LIFESTYLE CHANGE

Take a moment to sit quietly before God with the question of the lifestyle change that is most appropriate for you. When you're ready, use the space below to write down one or two lifestyle changes that come to mind. Try to be as specific as possible. For example, rather than say, "I will try to stay aware of God's presence," you might say, "I will set reminders on my phone to stay aware of God's presence throughout my day."

### ***FOR MY STRETCHING RHYTHMS GROWTH PLAN, THE LIFESTYLE CHANGE I WILL MAKE IS***

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On Day 51, you will transfer your lifestyle change to your Stretching Rhythms Growth Plan. Tomorrow, there is one last growth practice to identify: a learning resource. For now, take time to be with God through your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer.





# DAY 46 | THURSDAY

## DEVELOPING YOUR PLAN

[learning resources]



### INTRODUCTION

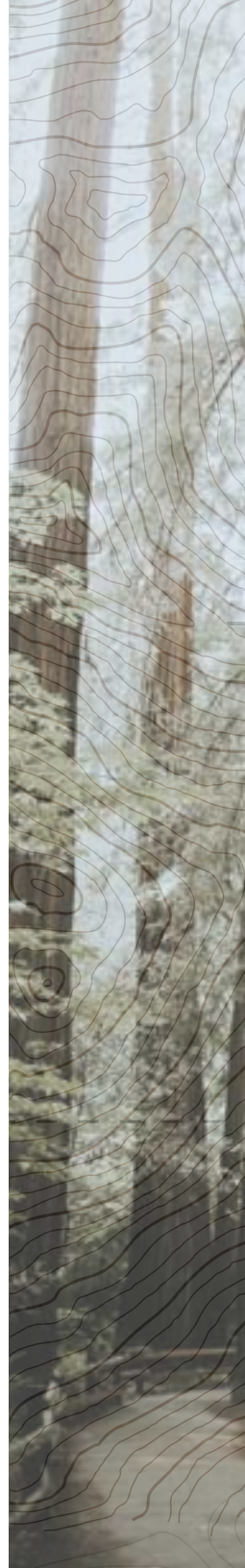
Today, you move another step closer to developing your Stretching Practices Growth Plan by identifying a learning resource. The purpose of a learning resource is to help us think in a new way about our growth area--to renew our minds. The Apostle Paul saw a renewed mind as key to the transformational process (Rom 12:2).


God reveals new insights and perspectives which stimulate our growth and give us a vision for a new way to live. One obvious way to do this is by studying what Scripture has to say about our growth area. Being a student of Scripture is critical for our growth. By engaging in a Bible-reading practice you are demonstrating an openness to transformational Biblical insights.

In addition to being students of Scripture, we can learn from those who are skilled at communicating God's truths through books, podcasts, curriculum, videos, mobile apps and other resources. The objective, of course, is not simply to fill our heads with information. Rather, it is to work the insights of a resource into our daily lives.

### RESOURCE TOOL

As you think about your growth area, you may already be aware of an excellent resource to stimulate your mind during the next 44 days. If you're not sure what resource to use, Northview leadership have identified a set of recommended resources for growing in each of the growth areas and discipleship stages. You can access these by going to [northviewchurch.us/myresources](http://northviewchurch.us/myresources) and click on learning resources to see a list of options to consider.





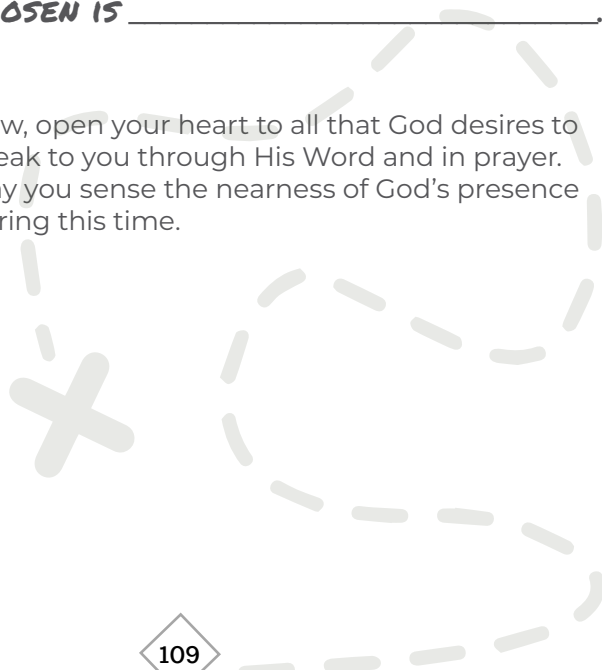
Take time to click through the links to the resources you find listed there. As you do, keep one ear attuned to the Holy Spirit, asking God to help you choose the learning resource that will best address your growth area.

### **CHOOSING A LEARNING RESOURCE**

Make note below of the learning resource that you feel God leading you toward. If it is something that you need to purchase, plan now to order / purchase that resource before you begin to work your Plan (on Day 51).

**FOR MY STRETCHING RHYTHMS GROWTH PLAN, THE LEARNING RESOURCE I HAVE CHOSEN IS \_\_\_\_\_.**

Now, open your heart to all that God desires to speak to you through His Word and in prayer. May you sense the nearness of God's presence during this time.





# DAY 47 | FRIDAY

## DEVELOPING YOUR PLAN

[training partners]

### INTRODUCTION

At Northview, one of our core values is relationships that are real, raw and rich with love for one another. God created us to live in community with others and we are stronger when we do so. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says,

*“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor. If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls down and has no one to help them up.”*

While good Christian friendships are important, we need more than Christian friendships. God intends us to have relationships with others who will stretch, encourage, pray for and help us to grow more into the likeness of Jesus. And we are called to do the same for others. That is the role of Training Partners.

### TRAINING PARTNERS

Training Partners are same-gender groups of two to four people who are committed to following Jesus by working through their respective Stretching Rhythms Growth Plans together.

Ideally, Training Partners meet weekly for the duration of their Stretching Rhythms Growth Plans (a total of 6 weeks). There are two types of Training Partner relationships:

One consists of two to four peer-disciples. For example, it could be the men/women from your Life Group, neighborhood or SOAP study group. A great way to identify this type of Training Partner is to reach out to the discipleship relationships you named in your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan.



The other is a mentor-mentee relationship. In this case, a mentor/discipler might reach out to a new disciple; or a less mature disciple might ask a seasoned discipler to partner with them.

Of these two types of Training Partner relationships, circle the one above that you feel is best for this Growth Plan journey.

Does anyone come to mind for you to invite to be a Training Partner? Take some time to prayerfully reflect on the relationships in your life and then write down the names of a few people you will ask to be your Training Partner(s):

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NOTE: It's not necessary for your Training Partner(s) to have the same growth area as you. The Training Partners guides have been designed so that Training Partners with any growth area can journey together.

Today, extend an invitation to those you listed above. Be clear and specific about what you are asking: to meet weekly for the next six weeks to support one another through your respective Growth Plans. It may be helpful to ask them to commit the decision to prayer and to follow up with each person on Monday.

If anyone declines, don't be discouraged. Just give further thought and prayer to others you can invite and continue to extend invitations.

Please take time now to get with God through your Bible-reading plan and your pattern for prayer.

# DAY 48 | SATURDAY

## REFLECTION DAY

Many at Northview have followed the Growth Plan to help guide their discipleship journey. Here is the story of someone's experience with Stretching Practices.

### **GIVING MYSELF GRACE AS I WORK MY GROWTH PLAN**

*Working Northview's Growth Plan is all about progress, not perfection.*

By Suzanne Kishindo, Fishers Campus member

"This is the second time I have gone through the Growth Plan. Each time, my Spiritual Habit becomes more naturally integrated into my daily life. In the beginning, it was more mechanical rather than natural, but now I find myself working my Spiritual Habit with more ease, comfort and confidence.

"The Learning Resources were practical and easy to use. Over time, I found myself not being so hard on myself for not mastering my growth area right away or for not being consistent. I gave myself grace in knowing that I was working on a lifestyle change, and it was going to take time to develop new habits. In time, I was able to do just that. I modified the growth plan to fit my personality and my schedule. In the end, it has all come together. I find myself to be more focused on others' needs and truly praying for each of those needs. I still have room for growth, but I am much further along than when I began back with my first round of the Growth Plan."

We all tend to be hard on ourselves when it comes to our own growth. As you prepare to write and work your Stretching Rhythms Growth Plan, what are some things you want to keep in mind so that you give yourself grace, as Suzanne did.

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Dedicate time now to your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer.



\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## DAY 49 | SUNDAY

Today, you may follow your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Or, you may simply rest in the knowledge of God's incomprehensible love for you.

This can also be a grace day to allow you to get caught up from any days you missed this past week.

# DAY 50 | MONDAY

## WRITING YOUR STRETCHING RHYTHMS GROWTH PLAN

[growth practices]



### INTRODUCTION

Today, you will bring together all that you prayerfully developed and researched last week. In the space provided below, write your Stretching Rhythms Growth Plan.

### STRETCHING RHYTHMS GROWTH PLAN

With the help of the Holy Spirit and the support of my Training Partners, I commit to engage in these Stretching Rhythms for the next 40 days.

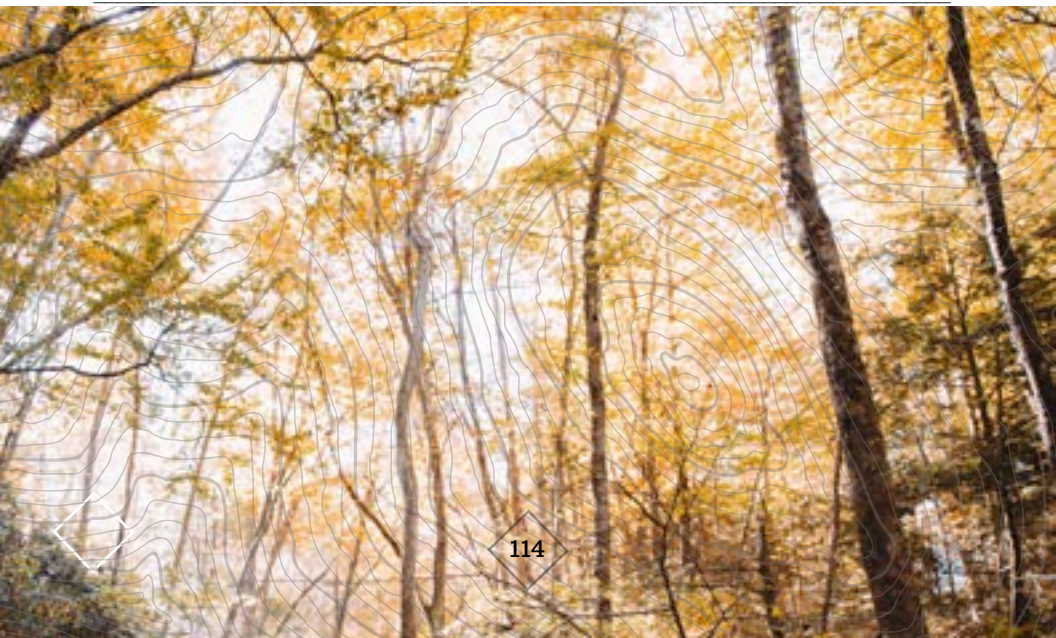
The growth area I have chosen for this Growth Plan is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The Training Partners who are joining me in this journey are:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



I've chosen the following growth practices to offer to God to help me grow:

### Lifestyle Change

List one or two changes you will make to help you grow in your growth area. Be specific (ex. I will find one person every day to write a note of encouragement to.)\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Learning Resource

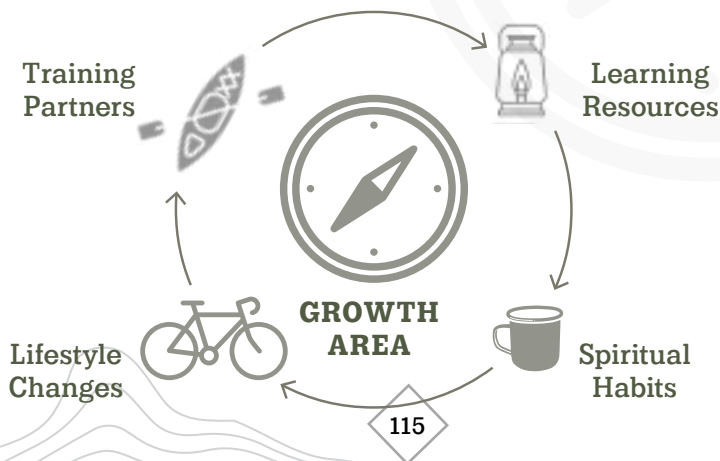
List the resource you will use to help you learn about the growth area you've chosen. Indicate how often you plan to interact with that resource (ex. I will read my book 15 minutes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday; I will listen to X podcast on my drive to work, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Spiritual Habits

List the spiritual habits (your Bible-reading plan and prayer pattern) that you selected for your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

Day 50 continued on next page...



# DAY 50 | MONDAY

## Prayer of Commitment

After you finish writing your Growth Plan, offer it up to God. Consider praying the following prayer of commitment:

Loving God, in Proverbs 16:3, it says, *"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans."* So, I commit this Growth Plan to you. I ask for your help to stick with the practices of this Growth Plan, and I trust that you will take those practices and use them to bring about a change in me toward christlikeness. As I work my Plan, please shape me to be a more accurate reflection of you to everyone I encounter. I acknowledge that I cannot do this on my own power. I need you. I know you will be faithful to do your part. Help me to be faithful to my part--the practices of this Stretching Rhythms Growth Plan. Thank you, God. Amen.

## FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

Putting together the pieces of your Stretching Rhythms Growth Plan is an important step in the journey of spiritual transformation. As you remain committed to your growth practices, God will take and use them to form you. Remember, only the Holy Spirit can bring about true and lasting change in you. As you keep your heart in a posture of humility and trust, and remain committed to your growth practices, God will work out whatever changes he desires to bring about in you.

In each of the following pages, you will notice that there is a daily prompt to engage in your spiritual habit and/or your learning resource. Feel free to approach your daily practices according to how you spelled them out in your Stretching Practices Growth Plan.



Along the way, it is likely that you'll miss a day or two. That's OK. If that happens, just locate the day that you should be on and go from there. There's no need to try to make up the day(s) that you missed.

**Bear in mind that the purpose of this Growth Plan is not simply to get to day 90.** The purpose is to open our lives to whatever change God desires to bring about. You don't have to do your Growth Plan perfectly for God to work in your life. Even the smallest of changes is movement toward Christlikeness.

So, what will God do in your life these next few weeks? Aren't you eager to find out?! May God give you a teachable heart He can mold as He sees fit and the perseverance to see your Growth Plan through to His good purposes for you.

As you conclude your time today, turn your attention to your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. May you sense God's nearness to you as you open your heart to meet with Him.











# TRAINING PARTNERS GUIDE

days 51–56



This discussion guide is to be used this week to discuss days 51-56 of the Growth Plan with your Training Partner(s).

**NOTE:** In this first meetup, Training Partners should plan to set aside about two hours to work out the logistics of their meetups and to give sufficient time for everyone to respond to all the discussion questions.



## INTRODUCTION

**Read aloud:** Welcome, Training Partners! You've chosen to engage in the most important task God has given us: to become more like Jesus. That transformational journey isn't always easy, but you've already taken two steps that will make the road easier to travel: assembling a Growth Plan and calling together others to go on this journey with you. Some of you may have already begun working through your Growth Plan, but by linking arms with other disciples who are committed to growing, you have significantly increased the likelihood that your Growth Plan experience will be fruitful and sustainable. You'll also find that the journey is a lot more enjoyable when you go together.

What you get to be a part of – *with* each other, and *for* each other – is really incredible. God will use the words you say, the support you give and the prayers you pray to help shape the lives of your Training Partners. You get to watch transformation unfold in the lives of your brothers or sisters!

In this first meetup, the objective is to make a plan for how you will journey together. When and where will you meet and how will you stay connected throughout the week? Additionally, you will have the opportunity to get familiar with the Growth Plans your Training Partners have put together. There are questions to guide you along the way and some suggestions for how much time to devote to each section. Every journey begins with a single step. May God's blessing be on you as you take this first step on your Growth Plan journey together!

## GETTING CONNECTED

Does everyone know each other? If not, take a few minutes for introductions. If you already know one another, spend a few minutes getting caught up and then proceed to discussing logistics. [15 minutes]



## LOGISTICS

Work out your plan for meeting over the next 5 weeks.  
[10 minutes]

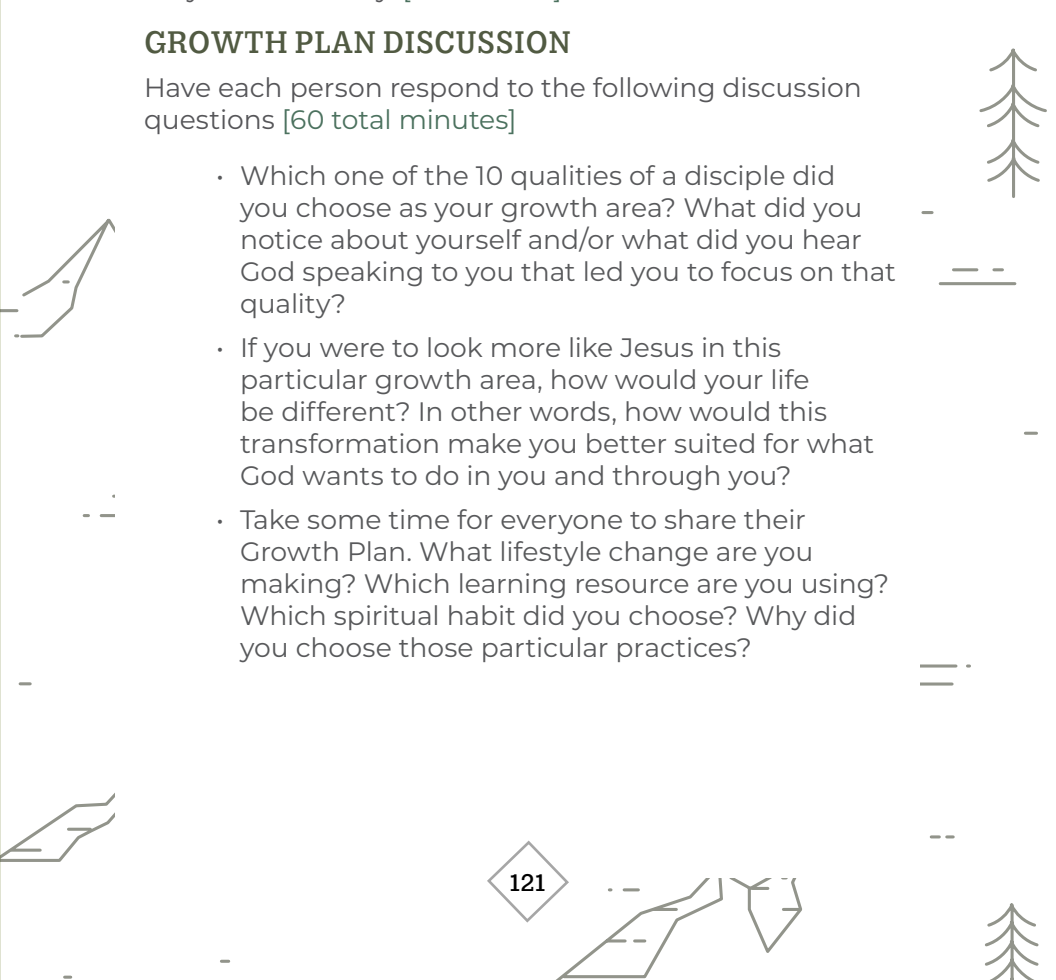
- How often will we meet?
- How long will our meetings be? (90 minutes is recommended)
- Where will we meet?

## GUIDELINES FOR SAFE AND HONEST DISCUSSION

Read through the Guidelines for Safe and Honest Discussions on page 216. Briefly share which of these guidelines will be easiest and which will be most difficult for you to abide by. [15 minutes]

## GROWTH PLAN DISCUSSION

Have each person respond to the following discussion questions [60 total minutes]

- Which one of the 10 qualities of a disciple did you choose as your growth area? What did you notice about yourself and/or what did you hear God speaking to you that led you to focus on that quality?
  - If you were to look more like Jesus in this particular growth area, how would your life be different? In other words, how would this transformation make you better suited for what God wants to do in you and through you?
  - Take some time for everyone to share their Growth Plan. What lifestyle change are you making? Which learning resource are you using? Which spiritual habit did you choose? Why did you choose those particular practices?
- 




## STAYING CONNECTED

In addition to praying for each other, what other ways will you be a support and encouragement to one another this week? [5 minutes]

## CLOSING PRAYER

Take a few minutes to pray together. Ask God to bless the work of your Growth Plans and to help you to give one another the support you each need for the journey. If any particular concerns or fears have been voiced, be sure to include those in your prayer. [5 minutes]







# DAILY GUIDE

days 51-56

This daily guide is to be used every day  
this week to work your personal plan.

## DAY 51 | TUESDAY



### WORKING YOUR PLAN [spiritual habits]

#### OPENING REFLECTION

As you begin today, consider the following quote from pastor and author John Ortberg:

“A disciplined follower of Jesus — a disciple — is not someone who has ‘mastered the disciplines’ and never misses a daily regimen of spiritual exercises. A disciplined follower of Jesus is someone who discerns when laughter, gentleness, silence, healing words, or prophetic indignation is called for, and offers it promptly, effectively, and lovingly.” <sup>12</sup>

As you continue to work your Growth Plan, be sure that you don’t forget that the purpose of your spiritual habit, as well as your other growth practices, is not to master them. The purpose is to invite the Holy Spirit to use those practices to work change in you so that you automatically respond to difficult situations and people just as Jesus would, if He were you.

In what ways do you sense God using your spiritual habit to shape you in christlikeness?

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#### SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

#### CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you, God, for meeting me through my spiritual habit. I ask that as I spend time in your presence that you would shape me to be more like you. May I become a person who responds in a christ like way to all of the challenges that come my way. I offer myself to you this day. Amen.

# DAY 52 | WEDNESDAY

## WORKING YOUR PLAN

[learning resources]

## OPENING PRAYER

Take a moment to quiet your heart and still your mind. Then, offer the following prayer: “God, what an honor it is to know that You—the God of Creation, history, love and wisdom—would be available to meet with me. Open my mind and heart to receive what you have for me in this moment and in this day. Amen.”

## REFLECTION

One of the reasons that following Jesus can be difficult is because our minds have already been formed to think about life in a particular way. In order to have our minds renewed (Rom. 12:2)(NIV), we have to identify those false or destructive ideas and embrace new ideas. As it relates to your Growth Area, what are the false or destructive ideas that you need to jettison? Have you encountered new ideas yet in your learning resource that replace your old way of thinking? Jot down your responses below.

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## SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## CLOSING PRAYER

Help me, Lord, to recognize those times when my thoughts are not submitted to you. I want to let go of my old ways of thinking about my growth area and embrace new, God-honoring, mind-renewing insights. May I become who you have called me to become. Amen.

# DAY 53 | THURSDAY

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## WORKING YOUR PLAN

[training partners]

### OPENING PRAYER

Proverbs 27:17 (NIV) states that “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” As you begin today, pray that God would make you teachable and willing to be sharpened by others, specifically your Training Partners. Also, ask God to help you to see ways that you can lovingly sharpen others.

### REFLECTION

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what God is teaching you through your Training Partners. How can you encourage them today? Is there anything you need them to do for you this week to help you remain committed? If so, reach out and let them know. Use the space below to jot down your thoughts.

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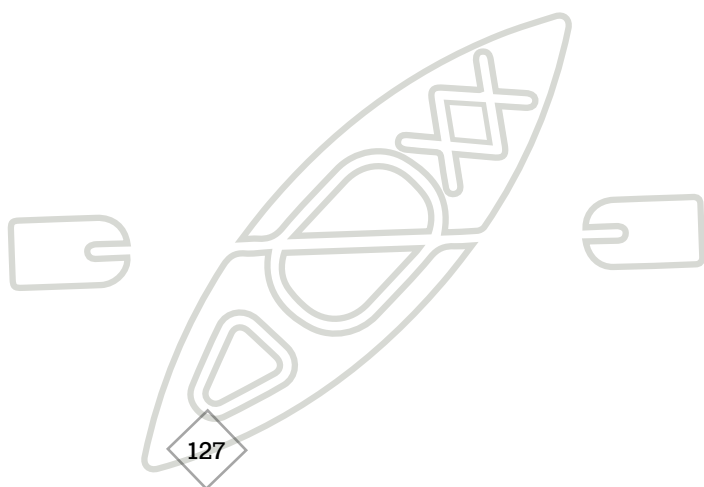


## **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

God, I pray for my Training Partners today. I know that they desire to know you better and to grow to become more like Jesus. Help them to remain true to the commitment of their Growth Plan. Work change in them as they faithfully offer their growth practices to you. And please help me to know what I can do to support and challenge them and to follow through on whatever you lead me to do for them. Amen.





# DAY 54 | FRIDAY

## **WORKING YOUR PLAN** [lifestyle changes]

### **REFLECTION**

As you begin your time today, take a moment to reflect on the following verses from the 19th Century hymn, "Take My Life and Let It Be:"<sup>13</sup>

Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee.

Take my moments and my days, let them flow in endless praise.

Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of Thy love.

Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice and let me sing, always, only for my King.

Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold.

Take my intellect and use every pow'r as Thou shalt choose.



How is your lifestyle change leading you to give your hands, feet, voice and intellect over to God's purposes? Feel free to record your thoughts in the space below.

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### **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

God, may the words of the hymn be my prayer today: "Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee." As I offer my lifestyle change to you, would you work through my hands, my feet, my voice —every part of me — to bring you honor. Thank you for your work in me. Amen.

## DAY 55 | SATURDAY

### WORKING YOUR GROWTH PLAN

Many at Northview have followed the Growth Plan to help guide their discipleship journey. Here is the story of someone's experiences with Stretching Practices.

### FINDING ACCOUNTABILITY

#### CATHERINE DOMBROW'S STORY

Northview attendee Catherine Dombrow had stagnated in her spiritual growth and needed a renewed sense of purpose. When messages from the Renovate series encouraged finding a training partner for accountability, she realized, "Yes, I need this!"

She began to think about working through the Growth Plan with someone. "God kept putting a name in my head," Dombrow says.

The person God kept bringing to mind was Northview member and Grounds Manager Marcia Schwartz. Dombrow knew she had to be vulnerable and ask. "That was scary," she says. It was not natural for Dombrow to depend on other people and she was relieved when Schwartz agreed to being training partners.

"God's fingerprints were all over this," Dombrow says. When it came time to decide where to grow spiritually, she and Schwartz both picked the same area: They wanted to listen to and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit. They also wanted to go deeper in their faith and to get into God's Word.

The two complemented each other well. Where Schwartz was strong, Dombrow was weak, and vice versa. "It's amazing how one of us will always have the answer to the other one's problem. It's not coincidence," Dombrow says. "It's God working."



One of Dombrow's take-away lifestyle changes from The Growth Plan is to be connected with someone for accountability. "We have someone we know that cares and will admonish us to keep going." Another result is that now, when Dombrow reads her Bible, she sees it through the viewpoint of the Holy Spirit. He has opened it up to her in completely new ways.

Dombrow encourages those who may be discouraged with the growth process to keep going. She suggests digging deeper or coming at it from another angle.

Dombrow and Schwartz plan to continue and their goal is to finish strong. "If you don't have a growth plan in place and accountability, how can you finish strong?"

In the past 55 days, you've developed a set of sustaining rhythms AND a set of stretching rhythms for your discipleship. With just 35 days to go, is there anything you need to do to help you finish strong?

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Dedicate time now to your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer.

# DAY 56

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## WORKING YOUR GROWTH PLAN

### GRACE DAY

Today, you may follow your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Or, you may simply rest in the knowledge of God's incomprehensible love for you.

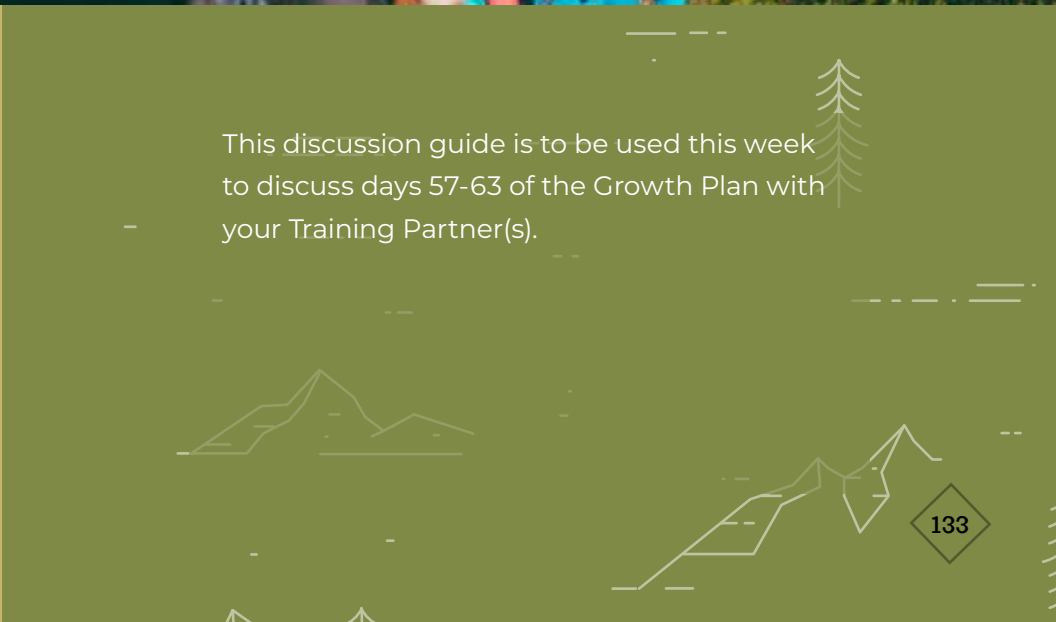
This can also be a grace day to allow you to get caught up from any days you missed this past week.





# TRAINING PARTNERS GUIDE

days 57–63



This discussion guide is to be used this week to discuss days 57-63 of the Growth Plan with your Training Partner(s).

## INTRODUCTION

The focus of your discussion today will center around what God has been revealing to you as you practice your spiritual habit. That doesn't mean you can't or shouldn't share insights you've gained from the other practices of your Growth Plan. But, by focusing on one, you have the opportunity to reflect more deeply than you would if you tried to give a brief report about your experience with every part of your Growth Plan.

## GUIDELINES FOR SAFE AND HONEST DISCUSSION

Turn to and read aloud the Guidelines for Safe and Honest Discussions on page 216. Commit to one another that you will do your best to adhere to these guidelines.

## SPIRITUAL HABITS DISCUSSION

Have each person respond to the following discussion questions. These questions are a guide intended to lead to honest sharing. Feel free to ask appropriate follow-up questions whenever it seems helpful to do so.

Important note: Rather than having all Training Partners respond to the first question and then the second, etc., it is recommended that you take turns responding to all of the questions. Then, the next person can respond to all of the questions, then the next. Following this format will allow each Training Partner to reflect on their experience without disruption and it provides an opportunity to give undivided attention to one person at a time. In using this format, be sure that you are mindful of how long each person is sharing, so that everyone has an opportunity to speak.



In other words, if there are four of you and you give one hour to these questions, be sure that each person is given approximately 15 minutes to share.

- Remind us which spiritual habit you chose and how often you are making time to practice it.
- What have you heard God saying to you as you engage in your spiritual habit?
- Are you learning anything new about your growth area as you practice your spiritual habit?
- Do you look forward to the time you give to this spiritual habit, or has it been difficult for you? If you look forward to it, what are you enjoying? If it's been difficult, why do you think that is?
- What emotions/feelings — positive or negative — have been stirred up for you as you've continued to work through your Growth Plan? What do you suppose is behind those emotions? In other words, how might God be using your emotional response to show you something about yourself or your growth area?

### STAYING CONNECTED

In addition to praying for each other, what other ways can we be a support and encouragement to one another this week?

### CLOSING REFLECTION

One of the benefits of gathering together each week is that it provides opportunity to develop listening skills; to become better at creating a safe space for each person





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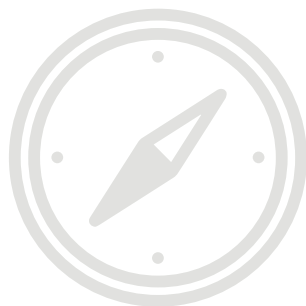
# DAILY GUIDE

days 57–63

This daily guide is to be used every day  
this week to work your personal plan.



# DAY 57 | MONDAY



## WORKING YOUR PLAN

[growth area]

## OPENING PRAYER

Take a moment to sit quietly and become aware that God is right there with you, eager to meet with you and to remind you of His profound love for you. Then, offer this prayer: “God, I thank you for the gift of this new day and for the promise of your presence. Would you open my heart to receive what you have for me in these next few moments and help me to respond in obedience to your leading? Thank you. Amen.”

## REFLECTION

Reflect on the following questions. Reviewing these questions on a regular basis helps you to hold on to the vision of the transformed life that God is inviting you into. Feel free to journal your thoughts in the space provided below.

- How would your life be different if you were more fully surrendered to God in the growth area that you’ve chosen?
- How could God use you?
- How would you be a more accurate reflection of God’s love to others?

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## **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

God, help me to remember who you are calling me to become: a reflection of your love into the lives of everyone around me and a participant in the good things that you are doing in the world. As I remain committed to the practices of my Growth Plan, please take my efforts and use them to shape me into the person you want me to be. Amen.



## DAY 58 | TUESDAY

### WORKING YOUR PLAN [spiritual habits]

#### OPENING REFLECTION

To stir your thinking about discipleship, consider this quote from pastor and author John Ortberg:

“Too often people think about their ‘spiritual lives’ as just one more aspect of their existence, alongside and largely separate from their ‘financial lives’ or their ‘vocational lives.’ The truth is that the term spiritual life is simply a way of referring to one’s life — every moment and facet of it—from God’s perspective. Another way of saying it is this: God is not interested in your ‘spiritual life.’ God is just interested in your life. He intends to redeem it.”<sup>14</sup>

Many Christians engage in a devotional practice and tend to leave God right where they met with Him. What does it look like for you to take God with you beyond the practice of your spiritual habit and into every part of your life? How is your Growth Plan helping you think about discipleship as connected to the spiritual, physical, social and intellectual parts of your life?

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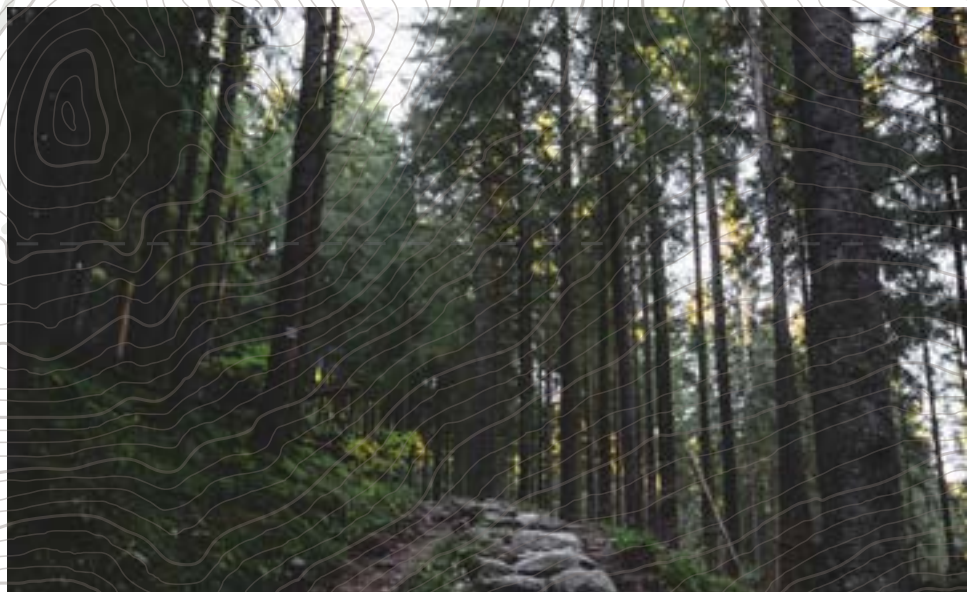
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## **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

God, thank you that your interest in my life extends beyond my devotional practice. Thank you that you long to renovate every part of my life so that I am aligned with your heart, soul, mind and strength. Help me to see your involvement in everything I do today. Amen.





# DAY 59 | WEDNESDAY

## WORKING YOUR PLAN [learning resources]

### OPENING PRAYER

Begin today by becoming quiet before God, recognizing His closeness to you in this moment. Read the following passage through two or three times, expressing these words to God as the desire of your heart: "Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long" (Psalm 25:4-5)(NIV).

### REFLECTION

Take time to consider any new insights God has shown you through the learning resource that you chose for your Growth Plan. What new thoughts, perspectives or ideas did you encounter in your learning this past week? How is God leading you to integrate the new learning in your daily life? Feel free to journal your thoughts in the space below.

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## SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## CLOSING PRAYER

God, I am grateful for what you are revealing to me about my growth area through the learning resource I'm using. Help the new insights and perspectives that I'm gaining to move from my head down into my heart so they may be reflected through my life. I truly want to love you with all of my heart, soul, mind and strength. Thank you, God. Amen.



# DAY 60 | THURSDAY

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## **WORKING YOUR PLAN** [training partners]

### **OPENING REFLECTION**

Reflect on the following quote as you turn your attention to God and God's work in you:

"Relationships of trust provide the foundation for transformational discipleship. Only in trusting relationships can we honestly deal with barriers to obedience and overwhelming sins that hold us back from spiritual growth." (Hull, 156) <sup>15</sup>

In what ways have you experienced transformational discipleship because of relationships of trust?

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What "barriers to obedience and overwhelming sins" are you planning to address with the help of your Training Partners?

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## **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## **SUGGESTED ACTION STEP**

Reach out via a phone call, text or email today with a word of encouragement to your Training Partners.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

God, I thank you that you work through my brothers/sisters to help me experience the transformation you have in mind for me. I pray today that you would help them to stay true to their Growth Plan. Give me wisdom to know how I can best help them to deal with anything holding them back. Thank you, God. Amen.



# DAY 61 | FRIDAY

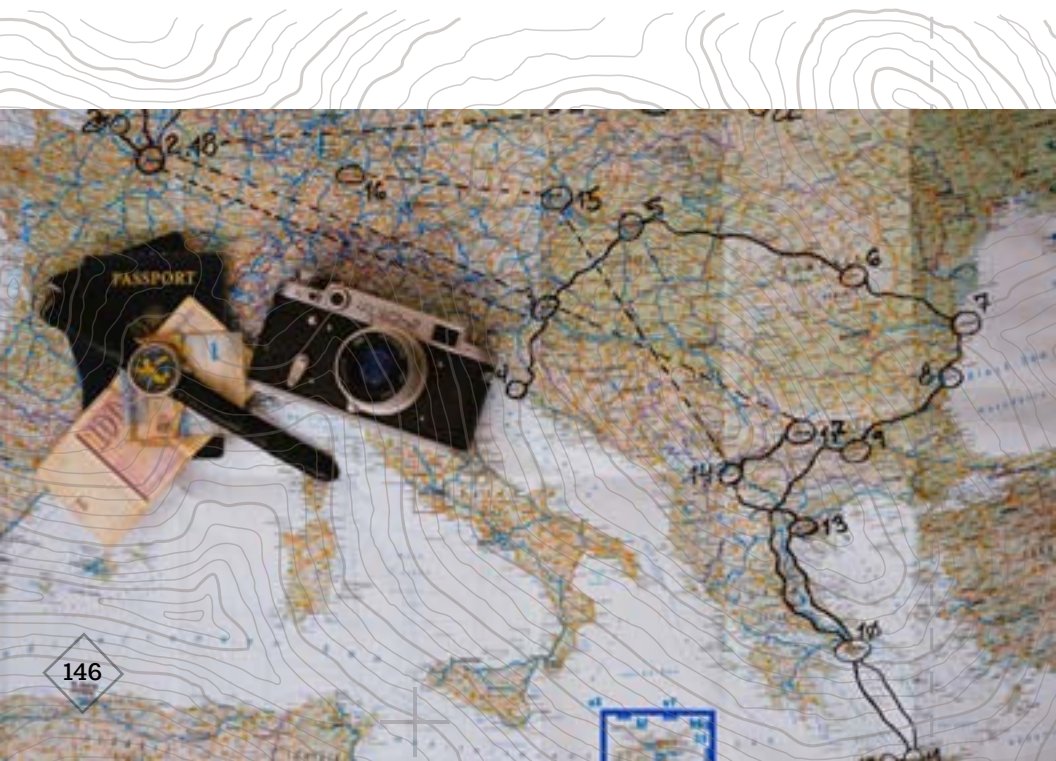
## WORKING YOUR PLAN [lifestyle changes]


### OPENING REFLECTION

As you turn your attention to God and God's work in you, take a moment to consider these words from missionary Elisabeth Elliot:

"Discipline, for the Christian, begins with the body. We have only one. It is this body that is the primary material given to us for sacrifice. We cannot give our hearts to God and keep our bodies for ourselves." <sup>16</sup>

The lifestyle change that you are making is a physical, bodily discipline. It helps to bring your body into alignment with your heart's desire to grow and be more like Jesus. While it may not feel like a "spiritual" act, our lifestyle changes are, in fact, a way that we are a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1).



A background featuring a topographic map with wavy contour lines. A faint, light gray silhouette of a bicycle is centered on the page, overlapping the map lines.

How do you sense God bringing transformation in you as you align your body — your lifestyle change — with what is in your heart?

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## **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

God, thank you that because of your great love for me, you are committed to working change in my life even more than I am. Help me not to try to work any lifestyle changes on my own power, but remind me to always depend on the strength and guidance of your Holy Spirit. I need you, and I love you. Amen.



## SUSTAINING RHYTHMS FOCUS DAY

Your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan provided a strong foundation of practices to sustain you as you follow Jesus. To solidify these new habits and to keep your foundation firm, it's important that you stick with them. Today, take a few moments to reflect on your Sustaining Rhythm of serving.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

In the final week of your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan you named a commitment to serving. What steps have you taken to begin serving? What do you still need to do to get started?

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If you have already begun to serve, what has that experience been like for you? Feel free to make some notes about your experience.

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## SPIRITUAL HABITS

Now, gather whatever you need for your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer.

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## DAY 63 | SUNDAY

### GRACE DAY

Today, you may follow your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Or, you may simply rest in the knowledge of God's incomprehensible love for you.

This can also be a grace day to allow you to get caught up from any days you missed this past week.








# TRAINING PARTNERS GUIDE

days 64-70



This discussion guide is to be used this week to discuss days 64-70 of the Growth Plan with your Training Partner(s).



## INTRODUCTION

We know from Scripture, Romans 12:2, that our experience of transformation has to include the renewing of our minds—what we know and how that knowing transforms the way we think about ourselves, God and others. This week, your discussion with your Training Partners will focus on the new knowledge and insight that you've gained from your learning resource.

## LISTENING WELL

One of the best gifts that Training Partners can offer one another is the gift of listening well. Theologian David Augsberger said, "Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable."<sup>17</sup> Listening well really is an act of love, and it's an important part of God-honoring relationships. So, as you engage in conversation each week, you are encouraged to practice developing your listening skills.

As you get started, have each person respond to the following questions: Who is the best listener you know? What do they do that makes them a great listener?

Now, as you engage in discussion, practice listening to one another like the best listener you know.

## OPENING PRAYER


Have someone open with a prayer, asking that God would make His presence known to you throughout your conversation and that you would be effective in listening to and loving one another well.





## LEARNING RESOURCE DISCUSSION

Have each person respond to the following discussion questions. These questions are a guide intended to lead to honest sharing. Feel free to ask appropriate follow-up questions whenever it seems helpful to do so. Please follow the same format as that outlined in the spiritual habits discussion where one Training Partner responds to all of the questions before moving to the next, and then the next. Just remember to be mindful about giving each person an equal amount of time to share.

- Remind us which learning resource you've been learning from.
  - From your engagement with your learning resource, what new insights are you gaining about your growth area?
  - What are you learning about yourself?
  - Are there ways you plan to apply your learning to your life?
  - What emotions/feelings — positive or negative — have been stirred up for you as you've continued to work through your Growth Plan? What do you suppose is behind those emotions? In other words, how might God be using your emotional response to show you something about yourself or your growth area?
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*Training Partners Guide continued on next page...*

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## STAYING CONNECTED

Have the things we've shared with one another today changed the ways we need to support one another throughout this next week?

## CLOSING REFLECTION

As you close your time, take a few minutes to glance again at the Guidelines for Safe and Honest Discussions. Ask yourselves, "Did we create a safe and honest space for our discussion today? If not, what can we do better the next time that we meet?"

## CLOSING PRAYER

-Wrap up your time in prayer, thanking God for any new insights or growth experiences that were shared. Ask God to grow your desire to know Him more. Pray that those who voiced any struggles would find strength and encouragement. And ask God to help you be a strong support to one another throughout this next week.

PLAYLIST: SONG ONE | SONG TWO | SONG THREE | SONG FOUR

# DAILY GUIDE

days 64-70

This daily guide is to be used every day  
this week to work your personal plan.

# DAY 64 | MONDAY



## WORKING YOUR PLAN

[growth area]

## OPENING PRAYER

As you begin, offer this simple prayer: “I’m honored that you would give your attention to me, Creator God. Would you reveal your love to me as I seek to grow close to you? And would you change me as I seek to become more like Jesus? Thank you for your presence and your faithfulness.”

## REFLECTION

Why do you follow Jesus? There is nothing more energizing and motivating than knowing — deep in your core — the reasons you are giving your life to pursue something. Reflect today, on one of the reasons Jesus provided, for why we should follow him.

With Jesus’ arrival on earth, God initiated the work of restoring all that is broken in the world, including our relationship with God. In His life, Jesus revealed God perfectly to us. He taught us how to talk to God (Matt. 6:9-13) and instructed us to remain in God’s love (John 15:1-10). Through his death, Jesus took on the sin that separated us from God and died to pay for the rebelliousness that we chose. In His resurrection, Jesus conquered sin and death, made a relationship with God possible, and proved that everything He had said was true.

By following the example and teachings of Jesus we learn how to have a personal relationship with the God of all creation. This is what God intended for us from the beginning (Gen. 1 and 2). Being given the opportunity to grow close to God and to know and experience God’s love for all eternity is a compelling reason to follow Jesus.

## SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## CLOSING PRAYER

God, thank you for meeting me here in this time and for being available to me in every moment. I offer my whole being in service to you this day. Amen.



## DAY 65 | TUESDAY

### WORKING YOUR PLAN [spiritual habits]

#### OPENING PRAYER

Today, as you begin, let the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray, The Lord's Prayer, be your prayer.

*"This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."*  
(Matt. 6:9-13)(NIV).

Is there anything about this prayer that helps you to understand how God wants you to relate to Him? What are you learning about relating to God as you practice your spiritual habit? Write your responses below.

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#### SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

#### CLOSING PRAYER

God, may the prayer Jesus taught us to pray be my central prayer this day and every day. Help me to grow closer to you, to become more dependent on you to guide me, and to become a reflection of Jesus in all that I say and do. Amen.



# DAY 66 | WEDNESDAY

## WORKING YOUR PLAN

[learning resources]

## OPENING PRAYER

Begin today with this simple prayer: God, in this moment, remind me of what is true: that You love me; that you are here with me; that you desire for me to be more like Jesus so I can experience abundant life and more accurately reflect your love to a lost and broken world. Open my heart to receive what you have for me today. Amen.

## REFLECTION

Did you know that the Greek word “disciple,” *mathetes*, comes from the verb, “to learn?” In the rabbinical tradition in which Jesus was a part, being a disciple meant learning to do everything your Rabbi did. For Jesus, this included ministering, witnessing, serving and other acts of love, but it was also learning how to think like Jesus. As one of Jesus’ disciples, how is your learning resource challenging you to think like Jesus?

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How is it stretching you to think in new ways about your growth area?

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## **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

God, I want to be a disciple in the truest sense of the word: ministering, witnessing, serving and loving. But I also want to have my mind renewed so that I think as you think. I pray that you would help me to internalize what I'm learning and that you would guide my thoughts throughout this day. Amen.

# DAY 67 | THURSDAY

## WORKING YOUR PLAN

[training partners]

## SCRIPTURE MEDITATION AND REFLECTION

The book of Proverbs is a collection of wise instruction for those who place their faith and trust in God. Proverbs 27 offers several brief sayings that remind us of the value of meaningful, loving, truth-telling relationships. Reflect on the relationships you have with your Training Partners as you consider the following verses from Proverbs 27 (NIV):

*“Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.”*

*“Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice.”*

*“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”*

How do these verses reflect your experience? What are you learning from your Training Partners?

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What can you do to encourage them today?

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What do you need to ask them to do for you?

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How will you let them know? Feel free to journal your thoughts in the space provided.

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## **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

God, I pray for my Training Partners today. Thank you that you have brought us together for this journey of growing and maturing. Help us to experience all that these verses in Proverbs 27 speak of. Please help my Training Partners to remain strong to the commitments they've made to become more like Jesus, and help me to know how I can encourage and challenge them today. Amen.



# DAY 68 | FRIDAY

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## **WORKING YOUR PLAN** [lifestyle changes]

### **SCRIPTURE MEDITATION**

Begin your time today by reading Psalm 103 as your prayer.

### **REFLECTION**

Did you know there is someone who wants your Growth Plan to fail? The Bible says we have an enemy who comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). As you reflect on your efforts to make a lifestyle change, can you identify any occasions or ways in which you have felt the enemy working against you? Make note of your observations in the space below.

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In the remaining days of your Growth Plan, know that the enemy has been overcome. Embrace the truth that you are a new creation, living a new reality in which you are no longer a slave to your old patterns. Consider how your lifestyle change has already made a difference in you, and perhaps, also to others. Remind the enemy that you are promised that God will finish the work He started in you. Continue to live your new lifestyle change with boldness and courage.

## **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

God, thank you that you have defeated the enemy that would seek to thwart my efforts to live faithfully in the new life that you have made available. Help me to resist temptations to return to my old patterns and, instead, to live my lifestyle change with the confidence that comes from your Holy Spirit. I acknowledge my dependence on you and put my faith and trust in you alone. Thank you, God! Amen

# DAY 69 | SATURDAY

## SUSTAINING RHYTHMS FOCUS DAY

Your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan provided a strong foundation of practices to sustain you as you follow Jesus. To solidify these new habits and to keep your foundation firm, it's important that you stick with them. Today, take a few moments to reflect on your Sustaining Rhythm of intentional discipleship relationships.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

On Days 29 thru 33, you reflected on the relationships in your life and the value of knowing and being known, loving and being loved, serving and being served. At the end of that week, you made a commitment to more intentional discipleship in some of those relationships.

What have you been doing differently in those relationships?

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What has changed as a result of your commitment?

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What do you still need to do to follow through on your commitment?

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**SPIRITUAL HABITS**

Now, gather whatever you need for your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer.





# DAY 70 | SUNDAY

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## GRACE DAY

Today, you may follow your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Or, you may simply rest in the knowledge of God's incomprehensible love for you.

This can also be a grace day to allow you to get caught up from any days you missed this past week.



# TRAINING PARTNERS GUIDE

days 71-77

This discussion guide is to be used this week to discuss days 71-77 of the Growth Plan with your Training Partner(s).



The background of the page is a solid olive green color. It features faint, white line-art illustrations of a landscape. In the top left, there are jagged mountain peaks. To their right are several stylized evergreen trees. In the bottom left, another range of mountains is visible. In the bottom right, a canoe is shown with two figures inside, one of whom appears to be paddling. The entire page is framed by a white border.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In Matthew 7:24, Jesus tells us that those who put His way of life into practice are wise. And in James 1:22, we are instructed not to be hearers of the Word only, but doers. Clearly, the godly insights we gain and the time we spend in God's presence will begin to shape the way we live so that we increasingly think, act and speak in ways that reflect Jesus to others. This week, your discussion with your Training Partners will focus on the particular lifestyle change that you've been practicing.

## **GUIDELINES FOR SAFE AND HONEST DISCUSSION**

Turn to and read aloud the Guidelines for Safe and Honest Discussions on page 216. Commit to one another that you will do your best to adhere to these guidelines.


## **OPENING PRAYER**

Have someone open with a prayer, asking that God would make His presence known to you throughout your conversation and that you would be effective in listening to and loving one another well.



## LIFESTYLE CHANGE DISCUSSION

Have each person respond to the following discussion questions. These questions are a guide intended to lead to honest sharing. Feel free to ask appropriate follow-up questions whenever it seems helpful to do so. Please follow the same format as outlined in the spiritual habits discussion, where one Training Partner responds to all of the questions before moving to the next, and then the next. Just remember to be mindful about giving each person an equal amount of time to share.

- Remind us what lifestyle change you've been practicing.
  - What has God been teaching you through your lifestyle change?
  - What has been the greatest challenge you've experienced with this lifestyle change?
  - Have you sensed God leading you to make any adjustments to your lifestyle change? If so, what kind of adjustment?
  - What emotions/feelings — positive or negative — have been stirred up for you as you've continued to work through your Growth Plan? What do you suppose is behind those emotions? In other words, how might God be using your emotional response to show you something about yourself or your growth area?
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## STAYING CONNECTED

How can we continue to be a solid support system for one another as we continue the journey of our Growth Plans throughout this next week?

The page features a decorative background with line art illustrations of mountains, trees, and a canoe. At the top left, there are two mountain peaks. To their right are two small trees. Further right is a single tall, thin tree. In the bottom left corner, there are more mountain peaks. In the bottom center, there is a canoe with a tree inside it. The page is decorated with various horizontal and vertical lines of different lengths and styles (solid, dashed, dotted) scattered across the background.

## CLOSING REFLECTION

As you close your time, take a few minutes to glance again at the Guidelines for Safe and Honest Discussions. Ask yourselves, “Did we create a safe and honest space for our discussion today? If not, what can we do better the next time that we meet?”

## CLOSING PRAYER

Wrap up your time in prayer, thanking God for any new insights or growth experiences that were shared. Ask God to grow your desire to know Him more. Pray that those who voiced any struggles would find strength and encouragement. Ask God to help you be a strong support to one another throughout this next week.

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a dense forest. The top half shows tall, moss-covered trees with sunlight filtering through the canopy. The bottom half shows a rocky stream bed with water flowing over the stones. Overlaid on the entire image is a pattern of thin, light-colored topographic contour lines. A dark green horizontal band spans the width of the image, serving as a background for the title.

# DAILY GUIDE

days 71-77

This daily guide is to be used every day  
this week to work your personal plan.

# DAY 71 | MONDAY



## WORKING YOUR PLAN [growth area]

### REFLECTION

As you turn your attention to God's work in you through your Growth Plan, reflect for a moment on another compelling reason why we follow Jesus. As Jesus went around teaching, He presented a vision to people about a new way to live. He says that one of his purposes in coming to earth is "that they may have life and have it to the full," (John 10:10b (NIV)).

What did Jesus say a full and abundant life looked like? Jesus calls us to live at peace; He expects us to be generous with our time and money; He calls us to forgive those who have hurt us; He tells us to put one another's needs ahead of our own; He expects us to propagate love. What, then, is the outcome of such a life? This is what Jesus says:

"Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock," (Matt. 7:24-25)(NIV).

Conversely, Jesus says that those who don't apply his teaching to their lives can expect life's challenges to overwhelm — even devastate — them (Matt. 7:26-27).

One of the reasons Jesus came to earth was to show us how to live as God always intended. When we choose to live this way, we are building our life on a strong foundation which leads to the abundant life of which Jesus spoke. How is your Growth Plan shaping you to live more like God always intended for you to live? Record your thoughts below.

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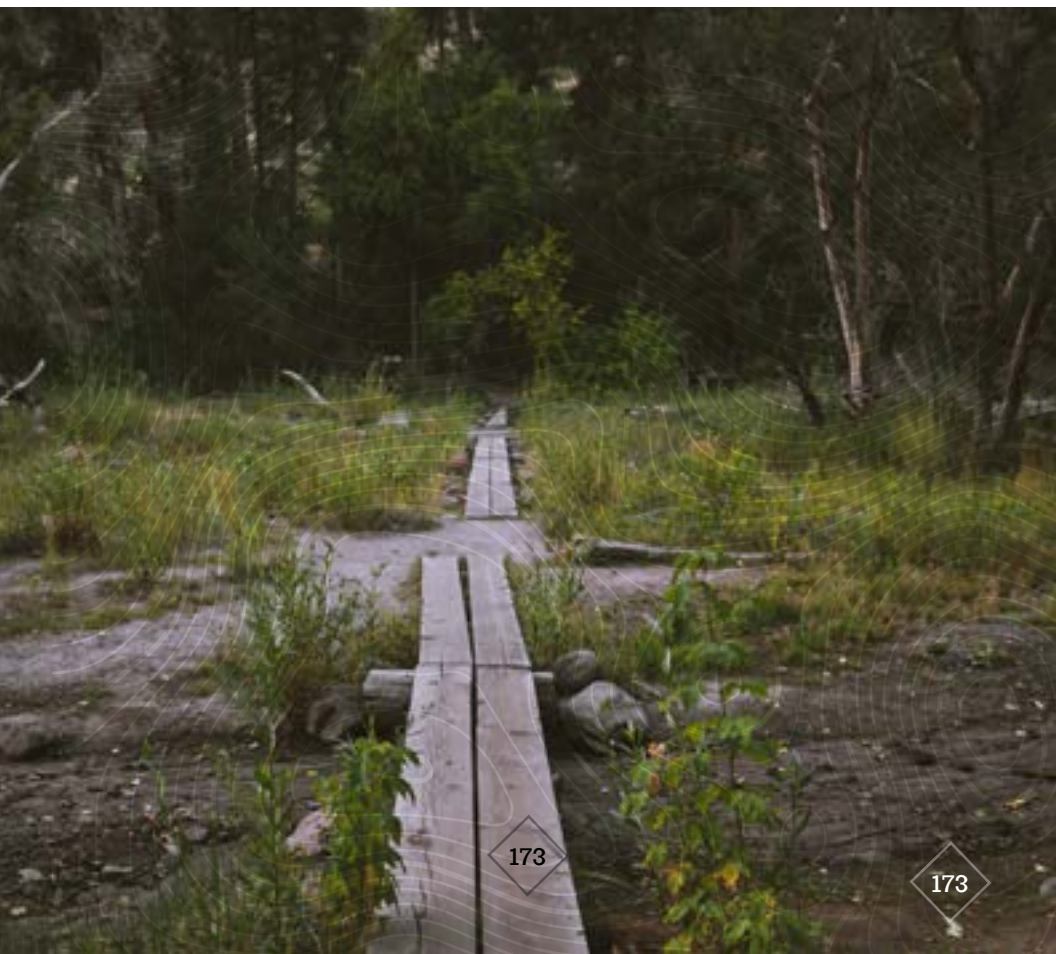
A decorative topographic map pattern with concentric, wavy lines in a light gray color, located at the top of the page.

## SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

### CLOSING PRAYER

God, I know that the vision of life Jesus taught about and modeled is the life you desire for me. Help my desire to grow, too. And please use the practices of my Growth Plan to bring my heart and my actions into alignment with Jesus' vision for Your world. I submit myself to you today. Amen.





# DAY 72 | TUESDAY



## WORKING YOUR PLAN [spiritual habits]

### OPENING PRAYER

Today, as you turn your attention to your Growth Plan and God's work in you, make this prayer from A.W. Tozer your prayer:

"Lord, teach me to listen. The times are noisy and my ears are weary with the thousand raucous sounds which continuously assault them. Give me the spirit of the boy Samuel when he said to Thee, 'Speak, for thy servant heareth.' Let me hear Thee speaking in my heart. Let me get used to the sound of Thy voice. Amen." <sup>18</sup>

### OPEN REFLECTION

Do you feel that you are growing in your ability to discern God's voice? In what ways has your spiritual habit helped you? Journal your thoughts below.

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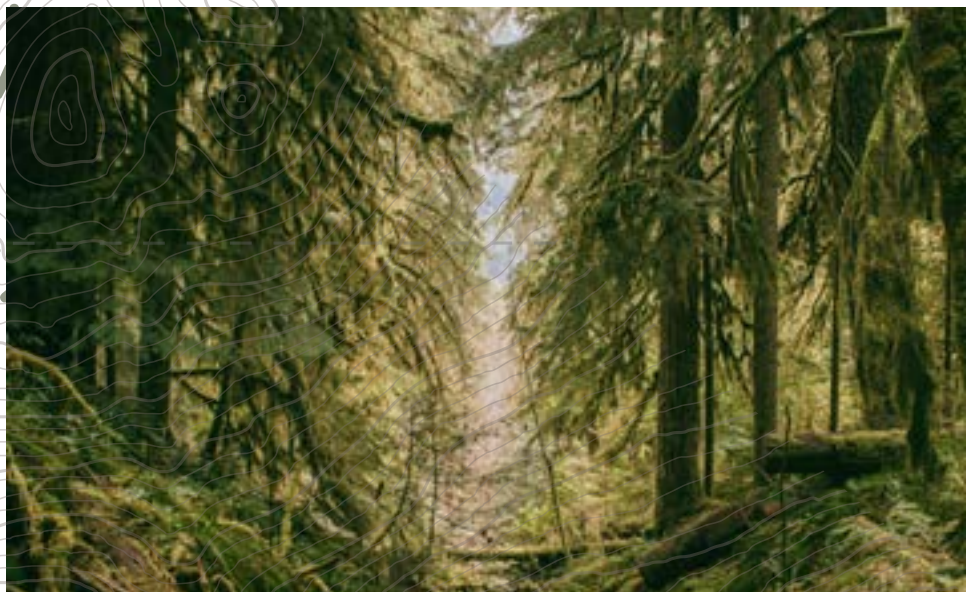
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Before continuing in your Growth Plan today, take a few minutes to quiet your heart and mind before God. Ask God if there is anything He would like to speak to you now. If God chooses not to speak, that's OK. It is not for us to determine when God speaks. Rather, it is simply our job to make space to listen.

### **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

God, would you help me to quiet the noises that crowd out your voice? Even throughout this day, let me notice you whispering your love and guidance. I want to get used to the sound of your voice. Amen.

# DAY 73 | WEDNESDAY

## WORKING YOUR PLAN

[learning resources]

## OPENING PRAYER

Begin today with this simple prayer: God, you know all things. You know me through and through and yet you love me just the same. Let me be open and honest with you in our time today.

## REFLECTION

Making use of a learning resource is an expression of loving God with all your mind and is an important part of being submitted in every part of your being. As you reflect on God and God's work in you through your learning resource, consider this quote: "Those who will love God with their minds, even if it gives them a headache, are those whose hearts stay on fire."<sup>18</sup>

In what ways has your learning resource helped to not only engage your mind in your discipleship, but also to keep your heart engaged and "on fire?"

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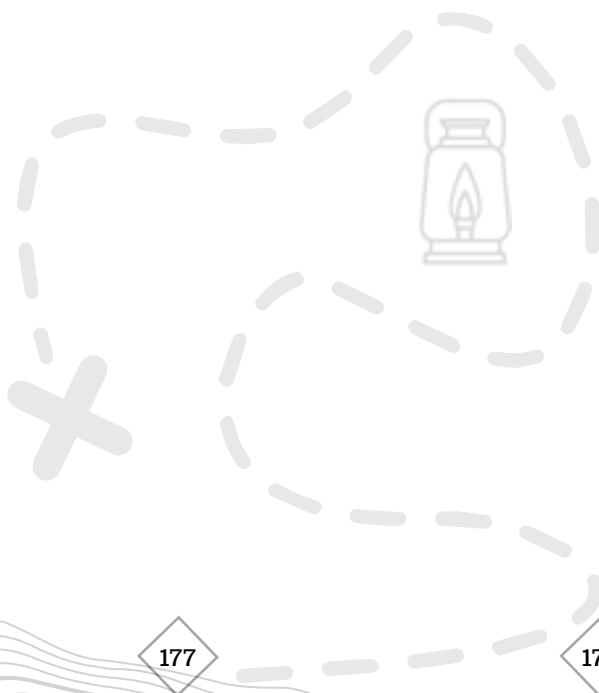


## SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

### CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God, who formed my mind and my heart, would you help me to continue to remain committed to learning all that you desire to teach me about my growth area? And may those insights light a fire in my heart — a greater passion for you, my Lord and Savior. Lead me today, I pray. Amen.







# DAY 74 | THURSDAY

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## WORKING YOUR PLAN

[training partners]

### OPENING REFLECTION

As you turn your attention to God and God's work in you today, consider the following quote from Michael Spencer:

"...the call that resonates most closely in the heart of a disciple is 'follow me.' The command to follow requires that we take a daily journey in the company of other students. It demands that we be lifelong learners and that we commit to constant growth in spiritual maturity. Discipleship is a call to me, but it is a journey of 'we.'" <sup>19</sup>

Why do you think God designed discipleship to be a journey of "we?" How does it help you to know that you are not alone in the discipleship journey? In what ways will you support and encourage your Training Partners in their journey today? Journal your thoughts below.

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## **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

I want to thank you, God, for extending the invitation to follow you on a journey into a new way of life. Thank you that I don't go on that journey alone, but that you surround me with others who are pursuing you, too. Show me how I can support those I journey with today. Amen.

# DAY 75 | FRIDAY

## WORKING YOUR GROWTH PLAN [lifestyle changes]

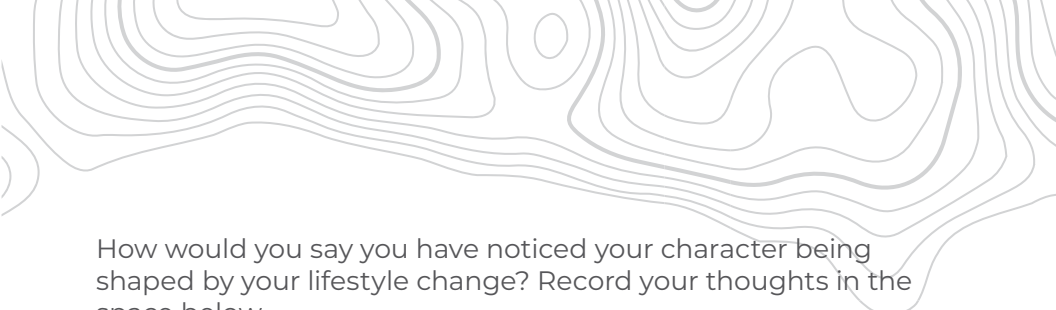
### INTRODUCTION

As you turn your attention to God and God's work in you through your lifestyle change, consider the following quote:

"Doing is crucial. Practices shape character. We are the kind of people we are because of what we do, what we practice. Again and again, Jesus emphasizes doing the word: Many will say 'Lord, Lord,' but will not be part of the kingdom; only those who do the will of God will enter. The wise person is the one who hears these words and does them; the foolish one hears these words and does not do them, and great will be the destruction" (Matt. 7:21-27).<sup>20</sup>

Your lifestyle change puts action to the transformation God is leading you into. It is the doing part of your Growth Plan that turns your desire to grow your learning and your spiritual habits into action. The process of doing also reshapes your character.





How would you say you have noticed your character being shaped by your lifestyle change? Record your thoughts in the space below.

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## **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

God, I want to be a person who puts your teaching into practice. As I continue to take action to make a lifestyle change, will you use it to shape my character — to change me from the inside-out? Help me to stick to my plan this day and trust that you are doing a good work in me. Amen.

## DAY 76 | SATURDAY

### SUSTAINING RHYTHMS FOCUS DAY

Your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan provided a strong foundation of practices to sustain you as you follow Jesus. To solidify these new habits and to keep your foundation firm, it's important that you stick with them. Today, take a few moments to reflect on your Sustaining Rhythm of rest.

### REST

On Days 22 thru 26, you were invited to reflect on your need to experience physical, mental and emotional rest so you can love well, serve wholeheartedly and reflect Jesus more accurately in all you say and do.

Sustaining rhythms of rest are built into God's plan for human flourishing—from God's example of taking a day to rest after Creation, to the ways Jesus modeled resting. You were invited to make one or two changes to your own rhythms of rest.

Have you been taking a full or partial Sabbath-rest sometime during your week? If so, what has that experience been like? Are you resting in other ways? Feel free to jot down a few thoughts about your experience with rest.

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### SPIRITUAL HABITS

Now, gather whatever you need for your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer.





# DAY 77 | SUNDAY

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## WORKING YOUR GROWTH PLAN

### GRACE DAY

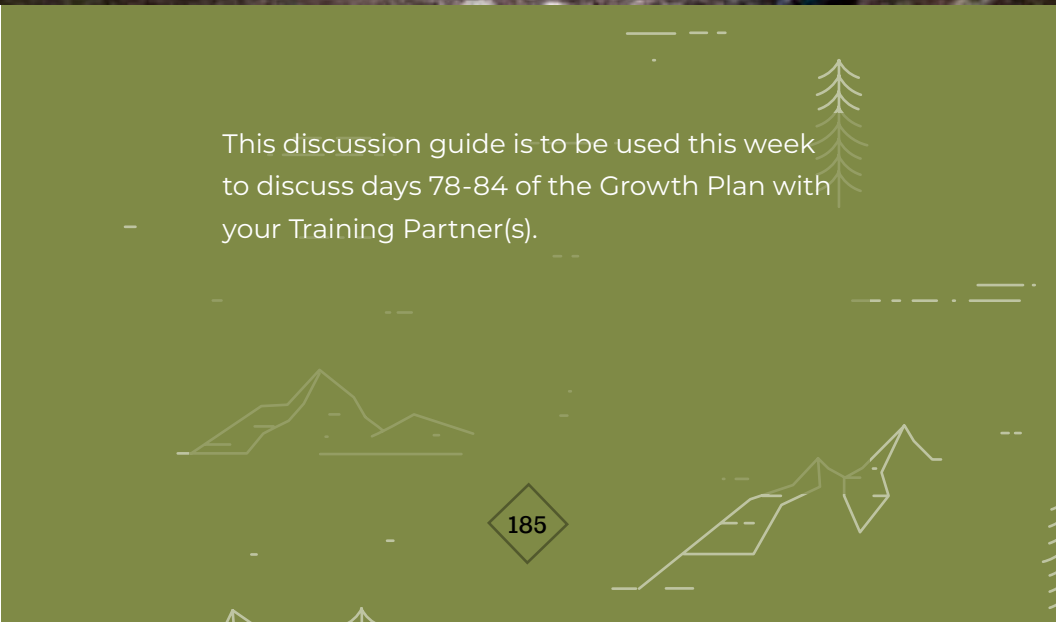
Today, you are encouraged to simply rest in the knowledge of God's incomprehensible love for you.

If there were any days this past week that you had to miss, you may also choose to use this day as an opportunity to go back and get caught up.



# TRAINING PARTNERS GUIDE

days 78–84



This discussion guide is to be used this week to discuss days 78-84 of the Growth Plan with your Training Partner(s).



## INTRODUCTION

Luke 5:15-16 tell us this about Jesus: “Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” Jesus was no stranger to the demands of people and the pressures of life. Yet, we see that he “often” got away to be alone with God. Engaging in spiritual habits provides us this same opportunity to withdraw and be alone with God. Today, we’ll return to a conversation about our experience with our spiritual habits and what we’ve been hearing from God through them.

## BEING PRESENT TO GOD ON THE OTHER’S BEHALF

An important listening practice in discipleship is being present to God on the other’s behalf. Think of this as having one ear attuned to the speaker while the other ear is listening for what the Holy Spirit might guide you to say or do for them. Ruth Haley Barton suggests “listening for what God’s desire or guidance for that person might be, not what our best advice might be or how we can be most helpful.” <sup>22</sup>

This is a practice that takes, well...practice. But, it invites the guidance of the Spirit in a way that listening, alone, does not. So, as you work through your discussion, practice being present to God on behalf of your Training Partners.

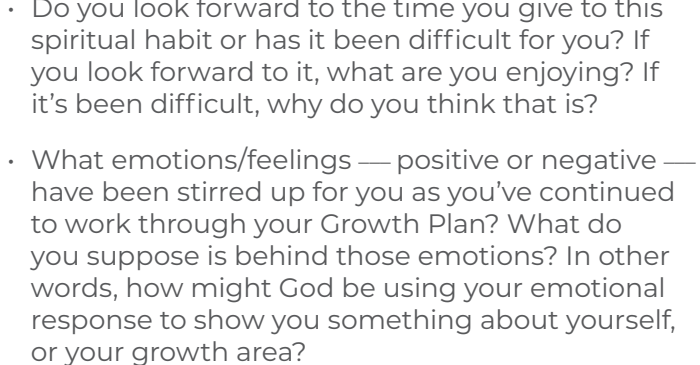
## OPENING PRAYER

Have someone open with a prayer, asking that God would help you to be present to Him on one another’s behalf.



## SPIRITUAL HABITS DISCUSSION

Have each person respond to the following discussion questions. These questions are a guide intended to lead to honest sharing. Feel free to ask appropriate follow-up questions whenever it seems helpful to do so.

- Remind us which spiritual habit you chose and how often you are making time to practice it.
  - What have you heard God saying to you as you engage in your spiritual habit?
  - Are you learning anything new about your growth area as you practice your spiritual habit?
  - Do you look forward to the time you give to this spiritual habit or has it been difficult for you? If you look forward to it, what are you enjoying? If it's been difficult, why do you think that is?
  - What emotions/feelings — positive or negative — have been stirred up for you as you've continued to work through your Growth Plan? What do you suppose is behind those emotions? In other words, how might God be using your emotional response to show you something about yourself, or your growth area?
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The page features a decorative background with line art illustrations of mountains, trees, and a canoe. The mountains are located at the top left, top right, and bottom left. The trees are scattered throughout, including a large one on the right and several smaller ones. A canoe is positioned diagonally in the lower right quadrant. The page number '188' is inside a diamond shape at the bottom center.

## STAYING CONNECTED

In addition to praying for each other, what other ways can we be a support and encouragement to one another this week?

## CLOSING REFLECTION

As you close your time, take a few minutes to glance again at the Guidelines for Safe and Honest Discussions. Ask yourselves, “Did we create a safe and honest space for our discussion today? If not, what can we do better the next time that we meet?”

## CLOSING PRAYER

Wrap up your time in prayer, thanking God for any new insights or growth experiences that were shared. Ask God to grow your desire to know Him more. Pray that those who voiced any struggles would find strength and encouragement. And ask God to help you be a strong support to one another throughout this next week.

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a forest with tall, moss-covered trees and a dirt path with wooden steps. Overlaid on this is a pattern of thin, light-colored topographic contour lines. A dark green horizontal band spans the width of the page, serving as a backdrop for the title.

# DAILY GUIDE

days 78-84

This daily guide is to be used every day  
this week to work your personal plan.

# DAY 78 | MONDAY



## WORKING YOUR PLAN

[growth area]

## OPENING REFLECTION

One of the reasons we follow Jesus is because He invites us to be part of God's saving and healing work in this broken world (Matt. 5:14-16; John 20:21; Matt. 28:19-20). Part of the way the gospel finds its way into people's lives is when God's people step into the brokenness around them to help others experience life as God intends for it to be. So, we actively look for ways to bring hospitality and friendship to those who are lonely. We comfort those who are wounded and grieving. We invite the lost into relationship with their Savior. We work to get medicine and relief to the sick, food to the hungry, freedom to victims of slavery, and rest to the weary.

Discipleship, then, is partly about becoming a person who can effectively and accurately represent the loving, compassionate, healing work of God in the world.

How is your Growth Plan helping you to become a person who more effectively and accurately represents Jesus to a broken world?

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## SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## CLOSING PRAYER

It is such an honor, God, to be invited to participate in the good, healing work you are doing in the world. I pray that I would more and more become the kind of person who can effectively and accurately extend your love, peace, hope and joy into the broken places of the world. Please continue to use my Growth Plan to grow me into who you would have me be. Amen.

## DAY 79 | TUESDAY

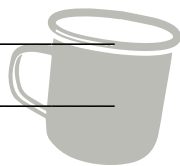
### WORKING YOUR PLAN [spiritual habits]

#### OPENING REFLECTION

Today, as you reflect on your Growth Plan and God's work in you, consider the following quote from Emilie Griffin:

"Prayer is very dangerous business .... For all the benefits it offers of growing closer to God, it carries with it one element of risk: the possibility of change. In prayer, we open ourselves to the chance that God will do something with us that we had not intended."<sup>23</sup>

In what ways have you found this quote to ring true? Has God been doing anything in you lately that you had not intended? What's that been like for you? Write your reflections on this below.



#### SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

#### CLOSING PRAYER

God, I am so grateful to grow closer to you through prayer and through my spiritual habit. Help me to embrace the possibility of change that you offer — even if it is a change that I had not intended. I offer myself to you today: heart, mind, soul and strength. Lead me in your love. Amen.

# DAY 80 | WEDNESDAY

## WORKING YOUR PLAN [learning resources]

### OPENING REFLECTION

In Luke's Gospel, we read the account of two companions who walk along the road to Emmaus. They're troubled by the recent events of Jesus' crucifixion and rumors of his resurrection. Jesus joins them, only they don't know it's him. He tells them what the Scriptures say about all the events concerning the Messiah. When they arrive in Emmaus, Jesus breaks bread with them, gives thanks and their eyes are opened so that they know who He is. He immediately disappears from their sight. They say to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32) (NIV)

While we can't relate to the experience of Jesus-in-the-flesh teaching us Scripture, we can know the feeling of our hearts burning within us as God reveals new truths to us. What are some recent insights God has revealed to you? It could be from your learning resource or something you've encountered in Scripture. Take a moment to write a note to God, thanking Him for what He is teaching you.

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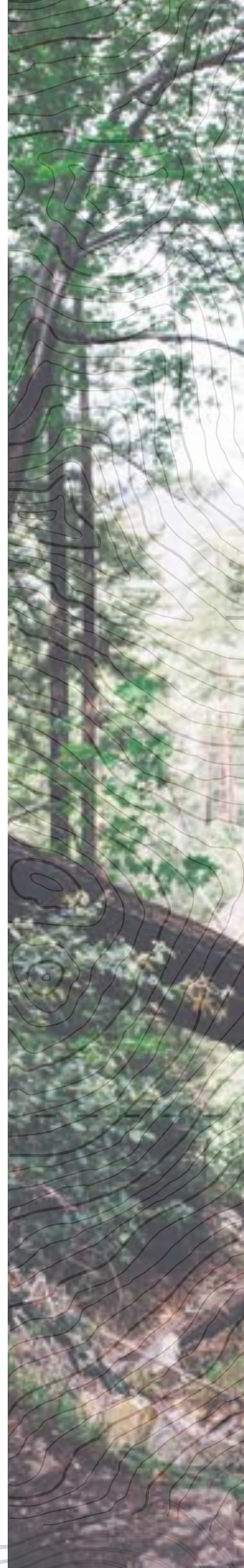
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## **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

God, my desire is that your truth would burn within my heart as I encounter you and your Word. I pray that you would keep the fire burning within me and that your love would spread to everyone around me today. I love You, Lord. Amen.



# DAY 81 | THURSDAY

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## WORKING YOUR PLAN

[training partners]

## OPENING REFLECTION

As you focus your heart and mind on God and God's work in you today, consider the following quote from David Benner:

"The hunger for connection is one of the most fundamental desires of the human heart. Like pieces of a puzzle seeking their adjoining pieces, we long for connections that will assure us that we belong. But it is not just connections in general that we seek. In the core of our being, we yearn for intimacy. We want people to share our lives. We want soul friends. We were never intended to make the pilgrimage alone. And attempting to make the spiritual journey on our own is particularly hazardous."<sup>24</sup>

What do you think Benner means when he suggests that making the journey alone is hazardous? How have your Training Partners helped you feel connected in your discipleship journey? Write your thoughts in the space provided.

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## **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Loving God, you have placed within me, a yearning for people to share life. Help me to open my heart to others who need companionship on the journey of life and discipleship. Bless my Training Partners today as we continue in the final days of our Growth Plans. Amen.

## DAY 82 | FRIDAY

### WORKING YOUR GROWTH PLAN [lifestyle changes]

#### OPENING REFLECTION

In the book of James, we find the following instructions:

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do,” (James 1:22-25)(NIV).

Your lifestyle change is designed to be the practical application of what you know to be true from God’s Word. It moves you beyond listening to doing. What have you been learning — through your lifestyle change — about the importance of applying God’s truth, rather than just hearing God’s truth? Record your thoughts on the next page.

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## **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

God, I don't want to be passive in my relationship with you. Help me to take what I learn from sermons, Scripture and from my learning resource and apply the Truth to my life. Even today, let me live into the truth of your Word and of your love. Let me reflect you in all that I say and do. Amen.



# DAY 83 | SATURDAY

## WORKING YOUR GROWTH PLAN

### SUSTAINING RHYTHMS FOCUS DAY

Your Sustaining Rhythms Growth Plan provided a strong foundation of practices to sustain you as you follow Jesus. To solidify these new habits and to keep your foundation firm, it's important that you stick with them. Today, take a few moments to reflect on your Sustaining Rhythm of rest.

### WORSHIP SERVICE

On Days 15-19, we explored some of the key reasons we gather to worship. You were invited to make a commitment to be a more engaged participant and/or to contribute something of yourself to others.

What have you been doing differently to lean into your commitment?

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What has changed about your worship service experience as a result?

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The background of the entire page is a detailed topographic map with various contour lines. A dark green arrow-shaped banner is positioned at the top left, containing the text 'DAY 84 | SUNDAY'. Below the banner, there is a date line with slashes. The main title 'WORKING YOUR GROWTH PLAN' is in bold. Underneath, 'GRACE DAY' is also in bold. Two paragraphs of text follow. The bottom half of the page features a vertical dashed line with tick marks, and two diamond-shaped markers at the bottom containing the number '200'.

# DAY 84 | SUNDAY

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## WORKING YOUR GROWTH PLAN

### GRACE DAY

Today, you may follow your Bible-reading practice and your pattern for prayer. Or, you may simply rest in the knowledge of God's incomprehensible love for you.

This can also be a grace day to allow you to get caught up from any days you missed this past week.



# TRAINING PARTNERS GUIDE

days 85–90

This discussion guide is to be used this week to discuss days 85-90 of the Growth Plan with your Training Partner(s).




## INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on coming to the end of this Growth Plan journey together. That you stuck with it until the end says a great deal about your commitment to grow into the person God intends for you to be. This final Training Partners discussion has been designed to encourage reflection and celebration around your experience.

## OPENING PRAYER

Pray and ask that God would make His presence known to you throughout your conversation and that you would be effective in celebrating and encouraging one another.









## REFLECTING ON YOUR GROWTH PLAN

Have each person respond to the following discussion questions. Even if the growth experienced by one or more Training Partners seemed small or less-than-expected, be sure to celebrate with one another. Give thanks to God for journeying with you as you share.

- Reflect on this Growth Plan experience. In what ways has God brought about change in you?
  - From your learning resource(s), what is one thing you learned that made the biggest impression on you?
  - From engaging in your spiritual habit(s), what did you learn about God? What did God show you about yourself?
  - Are there any breakthroughs you can celebrate?
  - Did anything surprise you?
  - If you could go back in time 45 days and give advice about this experience to 45-days-ago you, what would you say to yourself? Another way to ask this question is: What have you learned from this experience with the Growth Plan that you will apply to your next Growth Plan?
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## CELEBRATING YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

What did you appreciate about the relationships with your Training Partners? How did they help you grow?


*Training Partner Guide continued on next page...*



## CLOSING PRAYER


Offer up a prayer for each Training Partner, thanking God for His good work in them and making any requests based on what was shared. After everyone has been prayed for, close with this prayer of blessing from the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 3:16-21 (NLT):

*"I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources, he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now all glory to God, who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen."*



## ONE LAST THING

It's good to celebrate God's work with your Training Partners. Really good. But our stories of God's work within us can be a source of encouragement to others as well. For this reason, Northview is collecting Growth Plan stories. If you are willing to share, go to [northviewchurch.us/mygrowthstory](https://northviewchurch.us/mygrowthstory) and share your experience with church leadership. We want to celebrate with you any transformation God brought about in your life.



The background of the entire page is a topographic map with brown contour lines. A horizontal band across the middle shows a silhouette of a forest against a lighter sky. The page is divided into three main color sections: a light blue-grey top section, a dark green middle section, and a dark blue/black bottom section.

# DAILY GUIDE

days 85–90

This daily guide is to be used every day  
this week to work your personal plan.

# DAY 85 | MONDAY

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## REFLECTING ON YOUR GROWTH PLAN

You are entering the final days in a long journey of discipleship. Well done! Quite likely, this was a journey filled with a mixture of highs and lows, joys and frustrations, faith and doubt. What's for certain is that you are a different person than when you began. You may not be who you thought you were going to be, but persevering until the end has taught you things about yourself, about how you relate to God, and about what God uses to mold and shape your life.

During these final days, you'll be encouraged to continue working your Growth Plan, but the daily guides will focus on reflecting on your journey. Even if you feel some measure of discouragement that you didn't change in the ways that you had originally hoped you would, try to identify those things that you learned along the way and give thanks to God for what you learned.

## RESTING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

Begin your time with two to three minutes sitting quietly, becoming aware of God's presence with you.



## REFLECTION

Ask God to show you the ways that you are different now than when you started this journey 85 days ago. What do you need to celebrate? Is there anything about yourself that hasn't changed in the way you had hoped? It's OK to be honest with God about that. Feel free to record your thoughts below.

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## SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## CLOSING PRAYER

Close today with a prayer from your own heart. Give thanks to God for the ways you have grown and matured. Ask God to make these changes a permanent part of who you are.

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## DAY 86 | TUESDAY

### REFLECT

#### RESTING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

Begin your time with two to three minutes sitting quietly, becoming aware of God's presence with you.

#### REFLECTION

Take a few minutes to reflect on the ways your Training Partners have helped to support and sustain you on your journey. What did their prayers, challenges, and encouragement mean to you? What did God teach you about your growth area through them? Feel free to jot down your thoughts below.

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If you haven't already, be sure to gather with your Training Partners during these final reflection days and share stories of your growth and celebrate all that God did in you and through you.

#### SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

#### CLOSING PRAYER

Close today with a prayer from your own heart. Give thanks to God for your Training Partners. Pray a blessing over each participant, that God would continue to work out His good purposes through them.

## DAY 87 | WEDNESDAY

### REFLECT

#### RESTING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

Begin your time with two to three minutes sitting quietly, becoming aware of God's presence with you.

#### REFLECTION

Take a few minutes to reflect on what you learned through your learning resource(s). Look back through the notes you made on your learning resource days (52, 59, 66, 73, 80). What insights did you gain on your growth area? On yourself? What did you learn that you have integrated into your daily life? Feel free to record your thoughts in the space provided below.

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#### SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

#### CLOSING PRAYER

Close with a prayer from your own heart. Thank God for using your learning resource(s) to give you new insights and fresh perspectives to help you grow.



## DAY 88 | THURSDAY

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### REFLECT

#### RESTING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

Begin your time with two to three minutes sitting quietly, becoming aware of God's presence with you.

#### REFLECTION

Take a few minutes to reflect on how you are different because of the lifestyle change you made during your Growth Plan. Look back at the notes you made on your lifestyle change days (Day 54, 61, 68, 75, & 82). How has this lifestyle change affected your life? How has it affected your relationship with God? Feel free to journal your thoughts in the space provided below.

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## **SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE**

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Close with a prayer from your own heart. Give thanks to God for giving you the strength to engage in a lifestyle change. Ask God to help you continue to be faithful with the change you made.

## DAY 89 | FRIDAY

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### REFLECT

#### RESTING IN GOD'S PRESENCE

Begin your time with two to three minutes sitting quietly, becoming aware of God's presence with you.

### REFLECTION

Take a few minutes to reflect on your experience with the spiritual habit(s) of your Growth Plan. Look back at the notes you made on each of your spiritual habits days (Days 51, 58, 65, 72 and 79). What did God reveal to you about Himself? About you? About your growth area? Is this a spiritual habit that you will continue to use, either now or in the future? Why or why not? Feel free to journal your thoughts in the space below

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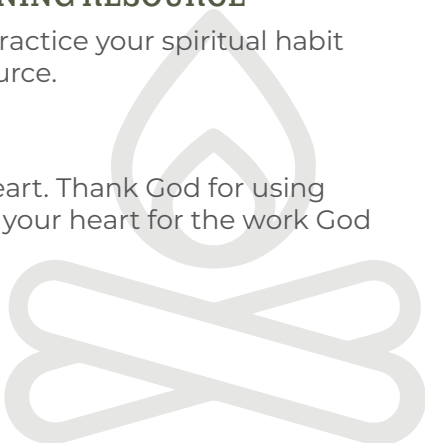
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### SPIRITUAL HABIT AND/OR LEARNING RESOURCE

You may choose to use this time to practice your spiritual habit or to interact with your learning resource.

### CLOSING PRAYER

Close with a prayer from your own heart. Thank God for using your spiritual habit(s) to help posture your heart for the work God did in you during your Growth Plan







# DAY 90

## REPEAT

It's no small accomplishment to complete a 90-day Growth Plan. Hopefully, these past few days have opened your eyes to the change God has brought about in you through these 90 days and you have had an opportunity to celebrate those changes with God and your Training Partners. You are encouraged to share the experience of your journey at [northviewchurch.us/mygrowthstory](http://northviewchurch.us/mygrowthstory).

Now that you've reached Day 90, you may be wondering what's next.

The most important next step is an evaluation of your sustaining rhythms. Do they continue to be life-giving to you? If so, that's great! Continue in your practice of them. If not, go back and make changes where necessary. If you want to consider some different Bible-reading practices and patterns for prayer, you can find options on the online growth tool ([northviewchurch.us/grow](http://northviewchurch.us/grow)).

You also always have the option to choose a different growth area and develop some new stretching rhythms to help you grow. In fact, the Bible says that discipleship is a lifelong process (Eph. 4:11-16). Therefore, it's important to keep your heart open to the ways that God is leading you to take your next step. You can use this Growth Plan, get a new copy of the Growth Plan at your Northview Campus or find an electronic version of the Growth Plan at [northviewchurch.us/growthplan](http://northviewchurch.us/growthplan).

Whatever you do, keep listening for God to lead you and never stop growing!



The image is a composite graphic. The top half features a close-up of an open vintage pocket watch with a dark face and gold-toned casing, set against a blurred green background. The bottom half shows a close-up of a person's hand with a silver ring on the ring finger, set against a blurred background. A semi-transparent dark green horizontal band spans the middle, containing the word 'APPENDIX' in white serif font. The entire composition is overlaid with a light gray topographic map pattern of concentric contour lines. Faint white crosshair symbols are visible on the left and right sides of the top half, and a dashed horizontal line is visible on the left side of the bottom half.

# APPENDIX



# APPENDIX

## GUIDELINES FOR SAFE AND HONEST DISCUSSIONS

To help create safety and promote honest and truth-speaking, Training Partners are encouraged to read through the following statements before each meetup. While it will require some intentional effort to follow this guide, those who do will get a taste of healthy discussions that go beyond surface conversations to potentially transforming conversations. Training Partners are also encouraged to reflect on this guide at the end of their meetups and to be honest about ways they can continue to improve their listening and sharing.

Take turns reading each statement aloud.

- My participation matters. I will prioritize the scheduled Training Partner meetups and will let my Training Partners know if I can't participate. I recognize that each meetup creates greater trust among us, and I want to do my part to develop trust by being prompt and present.
- I commit to practice active listening. I will not interrupt, nor will I hold side conversations with others when someone else is speaking. I will not act on the urge to "fix" others. I will listen intently, without judgment, seeking to understand others' points of view, realizing that other views can enlighten and challenge me on my journey. I will listen with the same focus and attentiveness that I want others to listen to me.
- I will make it my responsibility to ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to share. I will not dominate in our discussion. After I have spoken, I will wait for and encourage others to speak before I speak again.
- If a misunderstanding or conflict arises, I will handle it with maturity, going directly to the person to work out our differences, as Jesus instructed in Matthew 18. I recognize that God can bring about growth in my life and in our relationships through conflict.
- I will vigorously respect confidentiality. What I hear and say to my Training Partners, I will not repeat outside our meetups.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION'S

### Is the Growth Plan biblical?

While Jesus and the Apostles never challenged disciples to create a Growth Plan, they invited people into an experience of discipleship that integrated the core components of the Growth Plan. Disciples were always learning something new (Mt. 5-7; Mt. 13), they were challenged to make a lifestyle change (Mt. 7:24-27; Jn. 8:1-11; Mk. 10:17-21), they were learning from Jesus how to engage in spiritual habits (Mt. 6:5-18; Lk. 5:16) and they did all of this in the context of relationship (Lk. 6:12-16). The Apostle Paul was clear that discipleship was no haphazard endeavor, but that it required deliberate and purposeful training (Col. 3:1-17; 1 Tim. 4:7-10; 1 Cor. 9:24-27). One of the key purposes of the Growth Plan is to re-introduce a way of discipleship that reflects the intentional, relational, all-encompassing and lifelong experience of discipleship that we see in the New Testament.

### Why does a Growth Plan last for 90 days?

God brings about change in people in all sorts of ways, but He most often works within our human limitations. Research shows that it typically takes anywhere from 18 days to 254 days for people to form a new habit. On average, it takes 66 days<sup>25</sup>. This is true about humans because this is how God made us. For this reason, the Growth Plan is designed with the acknowledgment of our need to make space for God to bring new habits, new character, new life in us over time.

### What if I'm not able to find any Training Partners?

If you've reached out to several Christian friends and mentors and are still unable to secure a commitment from a Training Partner, you are encouraged to reach out to your Campus Pastor for help. Your Campus Pastor may know of others with whom to pair or group you.

### Can my Training Partner be someone who doesn't attend Northview?

Absolutely! As long as your Training Partner is someone who is committed to following Jesus and has a desire to grow and support you in your growth, they can use the Growth Plan. In order to access the Discipleship Self-Assessment and the Resource Tool, they will need to create an account. Also, unless they create their own RightNow Media account, they won't have access to the video resources that are made available to attendees of Northview Church.



# APPENDIX

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NOTES

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## NOTES

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Every story matters to God. And, if we asked, you could probably tell us yours. It would be the story of when you first decided to follow Jesus — the most important decision of your life. And, if we asked, you could probably tell us how, looking back, you saw how God was pursuing you through meaningful conversations, life experiences and “aha” moments. These are significant pictures of God’s love for you.

But, now that you believe, you may ask, “Now what?”

The book you’re holding is a tool designed to help you take those steps. It will help you develop an intentional, relational and all-encompassing plan for growth: a Growth Plan! The purpose of the Growth Plan is not to put following Jesus in a box, but to introduce you to the types of resources, habits and relationships that are essential for growing to be more like Jesus.



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