

Week 4: March 14

So . . . who do you follow?

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

John 14:6

When we decide to be a follower of Jesus, we discover more than a set of beliefs. We discover a way of life! Jesus is the way as our model/mentor and as the one who empowers us to live a way of life that resonates truth and engages God and life.

For six weeks, we will look at some life practices, spiritual practices that are as postmodern as they are ancient, practices that form us into people who love, people who are awake to life and awake to God.

These life practices help us live a centered, simple, connected, trusting, giving, and joyful way of life.

Trusting Way of Life

We trust on the simplest levels in order to function day to day. We trust that the alarm clock will wake us up on time and that daylight will come. We trust that the kitchen appliances will work, so we can prepare our meals. When we click on the TV, we trust that the CNN and Weather Channel hosts arrived at work and are ready to tell us about the day. Most times we take for granted that our car will start, that our place of work is still standing, that schools are operating, that snow plows will eventually plow our street You get the picture.

All relationships require trust. Without trust, life becomes complex, anxious, and may not function well, or at all. To follow Jesus, we need to trust Jesus—that he is truthful and faithful. We need to know that we can count on him. Trusting and being worthy of trust is the best gift we can give to anyone, especially to God.

Jesus says: “*Don’t be troubled. You trust God, now trust in me.*”

John 14:1 NLT

We can ask God to help us grow in trust.

“Because of his kindness you have been saved through trusting Christ. And even trusting is not of yourselves; it too is a gift from God.”

Ephesians 2:8 LB

Trust and faith are not optional.

“You can never please God without faith, without depending on him. Anyone who wants to come to God must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely look for him.”

Hebrews 11:6 LB

Sabbath

God has given us the most simple, pleasurable thing to do to help us learn to trust. God tells us to rest, notice the good things in our lives, and be grateful. This life practice is called Sabbath.

God practiced Sabbath.

“On the seventh day, having finished his task, God rested from all his work.”

Genesis 2:2 NLT

God wants us to accept the gift of rest.

“It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones.”

Psalms 127:2 NLT

Sabbath is important for many reasons:

- People break if the tension of life is not relaxed.
- The Hebrew word for “rest” in the fourth Commandment means “to catch one’s breath.” Sabbath is a time to breathe, rest, take in our surroundings, renew our spirit and our relationships.
- Sabbath liberates us from being bound to our work.
- Sabbath creates a sanctuary in time.
- Sabbath frees us to live our birthright as people created in God’s image, meaning that we manage our work rather than our work managing us.
- Sabbath inspires our time to be aware of God’s gifts to us and to give thanks.
- Sabbath helps us grow in trust.

See Tilden Edwards, *Sabbath Time* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1992).

At the heart of our choosing to practice Sabbath lie some tough questions: Who do you trust to guide your life? Do you trust God to take care of you if you let go of the reins and rest? Is God real? Is God powerful? Is God loving? Am I worth the time and care of Sabbath?

Just as we set bedtimes and mealtimes for children's health and well being, God gives us Sabbath. It is God's gift of love and care to us.

Life Practice

Look at your calendar and schedule in some Sabbath times—a day each week, a half-day each week. Plan ahead. What settings help you rest and connect with God and life? The park, the zoo, a room in your house, a library, your backyard, a comfy chair by the fire or by a window? Be creative in finding places that invite you to rest and renew. What people can enjoy Sabbath with you? Include them. If you need solitude, plan your time carefully so you can be alone.

“When we cease our daily labor, other things—love, friendship, prayer, touch, singing, rest—can be born in the space created by our rest.”

Wayne Muller

If you want to learn more about life practices that provide a trusting way of life, come next Sunday from 9:35 until 10:15 for the fourth week of our six-week study, Follow the Leader.