FORMATION JOURNAL

SPECIAL EDITION

VISION

To see the fame & deeds of God renewed & known in our time.

MISSION

Practicing the way of Jesus.

PRESENCE OF GOD

We pursue the presence of God through individual & communal spiritual practices.

Psalm 16:11 & John 15:9

FORMATION OF PEOPLE

We pursue deep change through transformational discipleship focusing on growth & healing.

Romans 12:2 & 1 Peter 2:2

UNITY OF THE CHURCH

We pursue the unity of the church family across racial, political, generational & economic divides.

Psalm 133 & Mark 11:17

FLOURISHING OF THE CITY

We pursue the spiritual, social & cultural flourishing of our city.

Jeremiah 29:7 & 1 Timothy 6



Church of the City Family,

We are thrilled to intentionally study Scripture together and spend time in reflection as we practice the way of Jesus during our digital detox as a church. It is our hope that this will allow us to pursue deep change through transformational discipleship.

> "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is his good, pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:2

We've provided this special edition Formation Journal as a 7-day experience to develop habits that we hope will transform your life. We've been intentional with its layout to provide participation during the weekday, as well as sections for Sunday notes, and additionally a Sabbath section—for you to use on the day that makes the most sense for your weekly schedule.

We can't wait to see what God will do in this season of our church.

"Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Renew them in our

day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy."

HABAKKUK 3:2

MONDAY, APRIL 17

"Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in you I trust. Make me know the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul." Psalm 143:8

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 1

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

TUESDAY, APRIL 18

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." Lamentations 3:22-23

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 2

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." Ephesians 1:3

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 3

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

THURSDAY, APRIL 20

"In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly." Psalm 5:3

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 4

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

FRIDAY, APRIL 21

"I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning." Psalm 130:6

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 5

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

SABBATH

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. Exodus 20:8-10

You are a human and humans have limits. God on the other hand is unlimited! He is omnipresent (He's everywhere). He's omniscient (He knows it all). He's omnipotent (He has all the power). Since the beginning, a core temptation of humans has been to attain these "omni" characteristics. But while we don't have the capacity to be God, we can become like His character - holy, loving, truthful, gracious, wise, merciful. Theologians call these communicable attributes because simply, they can be caught from God. You catch these aspects of His character by a lifestyle of closeness to God through the Holy Spirit.

But in our brokenness, we would rather be all powerful than holy. We would rather be all-knowing than righteous. We would rather be everywhere rather than the one place that we are. We try to assume the position of God in our lives, and in that moment we give ourselves a promotion that we just can't handle. The outcome is distractedness, anxiety, and exhaustion.

In a theological sense, chronic distraction is a frustrated aspiration to omnipresence. It's the outcome of trying to be everywhere at once. Anxiety happens when we try to be omniscient by being the all-knowing god of our own lives. And exhaustion happens when we try to be omnipotent and all powerful, keeping everything within our control.

As we commit to a weekly sabbath practice together, prayerfully consider these questions and journal your answers and any way the Spirit is leading you.

Am I attempting to live life without limits?

Is my current lifestyle sustainable?

SUNDAY, APRIL 23

MONDAY, APRIL 24

"I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble." Psalm 59:16

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 6

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

TUESDAY, APRIL 25

"This is the day which the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Psalm 118:24

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 7

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26

"Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done wonderful things, things planned long ago." Isaiah 25:1

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 8

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

THURSDAY, APRIL 27

"Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands." Psalm 63:3-4

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 9

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

FRIDAY, APRIL 28

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him." Psalm 28:7

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 10

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

SABBATH

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. Genesis 2:1-3

God himself rested. After six days of creativity and production at the highest level, God decided enough was enough and it was time to rest from His work. This doesn't mean God was tired. The words "and he rested" in Hebrew is "shabath". This is where we get the word "Sabbath" and it means to rest or to cease work. To rest in the satisfaction of a job well done. In the Genesis story of creation, God worked for six days and then rested for one, and in doing so it seems He built a rhythm into the fabric of creation itself.

Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. Genesis 2:3

Here God blesses the 7th day. For one thing, this means that the Sabbath has the ability to create blessing, and this is fantastic news for everyone who feels devoid of blessing. And even if you love your job, eventually it will wear you down. Work depletes your energy, but rest, on the other hand, renews us with creativity, life and emotional health. In Genesis we learn two things about the Sabbath – first of all, it is blessed and secondly, God "made it holy". There is a day available to you that is blessed AND holy.

Sabbath is an invitation from God the Creator to us the creation - a creation who was made in his image. We work because God worked, and we rest because God rested. When we don't accept God's invitation to Sabbath, when we fight this rhythm that is embedded in our bodies, we reap the consequences, and one outcome is an emotionally unhealthy life.

As a culture, we are hyper-busy and the fruit of that manic busyness is stress, anxiety, burnout, a worn down immune system, a pervading lethargy, a slower mind, and a soul that feels empty. These are the results of a life without rest, which is why as the story goes on, we see God command the Sabbath.

Prayerfully consider these questions and journal your answers and any way the Spirit is leading you:

Am I a victim of manic busyness?

Do I have a pattern of resting from work?

SUNDAY, APRIL 30

MONDAY, MAY 1

"I will give thanks to the Lord because of his righteousness; I will sing the praises of the name of the Lord Most High." Psalm 7:17

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 11

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

TUESDAY, MAY 2

"For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths, from the realm of the dead." Psalm 86:13

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 12

Morning Reflection What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3

"Since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe." Hebrews 12:28

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 13

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

THURSDAY, MAY 4

"Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." I Corinthians 15:57

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 14

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

FRIDAY, MAY 5

"Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things." Psalm 107:8-9

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 15

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

SABBATH

Then Moses told Aaron, "Say to the entire Israelite community, 'Come before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling." While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud. The Lord said to Moses, "I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God."" That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Exodus 16: 9-15

Each morning everyone gathered as much as they needed, and when the sun grew hot, it melted away. On the sixth day, they gathered twice as much—two omers for each person—and the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses. He said to them, "This is what the Lord commanded: 'Tomorrow is to be a day of sabbath rest, a holy sabbath to the Lord.'" Exodus 16: 21-23

Notice the language of a "holy Sabbath". Again, we see a connection between sabbath and holiness. This word "holy" can be translated as "dedicated to". If something is holy it means it's dedicated to something or someone. So the Sabbath is an entire day that is holy - that is - dedicated to God himself. Which means further that sabbath is not only a day for rest - it's also a day for worship. So there are always two questions to ask yourself about Sabbath - is this rest AND is this worship? If the answer to both questions is yes then you should do it with joy. If the answer is no – then the challenge is to let it be. There are six other days of the week for that thing.

So on the Sabbath you rest and you worship - and it's very different from taking a day off. Sabbath takes preparation. You won't accidentally fall into a pattern of sabbath. It requires planning. This is why Moses goes on to teach the Israelites how to get ready for the Sabbath.

The idea here is that you need to prepare for the Sabbath during the week. The Sabbath was both a command and a gift to the people of Israel. And to be transparent, there is no command to Sabbath anywhere in the New Testament. You don't have to take a Sabbath. But it still exists as a gift from God.

Even though Sabbath may not be a command for us today, it's worth asking how that is working out for us. The Sabbath is a gift, and it's a gift that very few actually want which forces us to wonder if we're doing it wrong. After all, taking a Sabbath is kind of un-American. We are addicted to busyness. We know how to work. We know how to play. But we don't really know how to rest. And this is one practice we'd be wise to cultivate. Prayerfully consider this question and journal your answers and any way the Spirit is leading you:

What preparations would I need to make to set aside a day of rest and worship?

SUNDAY, MAY 7

MONDAY, MAY 8

"Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name. Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all His benefits – who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion." Psalm 103:1-4

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 16

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

TUESDAY, MAY 9

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." James 1:17

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 17

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10

"Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream." Jeremiah 17:7-8

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 18

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

THURSDAY, MAY 11

"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you." Isaiah 26:3

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 19

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

FRIDAY, MAY 12

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5-6

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 20

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

SABBATH

One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grain fields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" Mark 2:23-24

The Pharisees are building a legal case against Jesus. Incidentally, there is no law against Sabbath snacking in the Torah. All the Old Testament says about the Sabbath is "don't work". It's right there in Exodus 20.

What is actually forbidden is work, not snacking. But one thing that makes this a little complicated is the broad semantic range of the word "work". What one considers work, another may consider play. What is work? What you define as work depends on your personality.

This level of ambiguity around the idea of work was a non-starter for the Pharisees. They wanted to drill down and find clarity in the command. So the Pharisees added hundreds of additional rules around the practice of sabbath. They made rules about how far you could walk on the sabbath. They made it a chore. In fact, to this day, there are thirty-nine categories of activity prohibited on Shabbat – and the details are contested between conservative and progressive observant Jews. While this all started out with a good heart, along the way it seems that they've lost the vibe of what the sabbath was for. It was for rest and worship.

Jesus understood this, which is why Jesus responded in a certain way in Mark 2.

Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." Mark 2:27-28

So Jesus would say to you, "The sabbath was made for your benefit!" It is a gift, not a burden to carry. We actually have the exact opposite problem of the Pharisees and their hundreds of rules. Many of us don't even take a Sabbath day off, let alone have a thoughtful approach to it. We need to relearn this ancient art form of Sabbath because it is a gift to humanity.

The challenge for today is simple. This coming month, plan to take a Sabbath. Don't get hung up on the day, but it should be every seven. That's the rhythm.

Prayerfully consider these questions and journal your answers and any way the Spirit is leading you:

What are some activities that help me rest?

What are some ways that I feel close to God?

SUNDAY, MAY 14

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MONDAY, MAY 15

"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation." Isaiah 12:2

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 21

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

TUESDAY, MAY 16

"When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?" Psalm 56:3-4

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 22

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17

"And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you." Psalm 9:10

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 23

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

THURSDAY, MAY 18

"I have set the LORD always before me. Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken." Psalm 16:8

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 24

Morning Reflection What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

FRIDAY, MAY 19

"He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless." (Isaiah 40:29

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 25

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

SABBATH

And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Mark 2:2

Notes:

Sabbath is a get to, not a have to. It's important to figure out what your rhythms of Sabbath must be when it comes to your stage and season of life.

While we believe you should sabbath because it's a gift, we can't presume to tell you exactly how to do it. Working and rest and worship look different to all of us. You may need to hike to the falls, or write poetry. You may run. We're all wired differently and you need to figure out what you need to do to rest. No one can show you that. You've got to study yourself.

When you live life from a place of rest, you will see health benefits to your physical, spiritual and emotional well-being. Maybe you've never done this before and it's all new. We want to encourage you to actually make a decision to make this a part of your life and you will be set free from the slavery of busyness and the tyranny of the urgent.

Here are some questions to help you craft your Sabbath expression:

What 24hr period will I Sabbath?

What do I have to change in my work schedule to make it work?

What would the components of an amazing Sabbath look like for me?

When will I start?

Stop for one whole day every week, and you will remember what it means to be created in the image of God, who rested on the seventh day not from weariness but from complete freedom. The clear promise is that those who rest like God find themselves free like God, no longer slaves to the thousand compulsions that send others rushing toward their graves. - Barbara Brown Taylor

SUNDAY, MAY 21

MONDAY, MAY 22

"But the Lord stood with me and gave me strength." 2 Timothy 4:17

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 26

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

TUESDAY, MAY 23

"For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline." 2 Timothy 1:7

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 27

Morning Reflection What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24

"My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Psalm 73:26

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 28

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

THURSDAY, MAY 25

"The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights." Habbakuk 3:19

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 29

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

FRIDAY, MAY 26

"The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail." Isaiah 58:11

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 30 & 31

Morning Reflection

What are your observations about this chapter? What does this passage teach you about God? How can you apply what you've read?

Evening Reflection

SABBATH

As you reflect on these last six weeks, what changes have taken place in your life and routine?		Notes:
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What has God been teaching you?		
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What rhythms and practices will you maintain going forward?		
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Journal a prayer asking God to seal these weeks in your heart and life and prepare you for		
the days ahead.		
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SUNDAY, MAY 28
