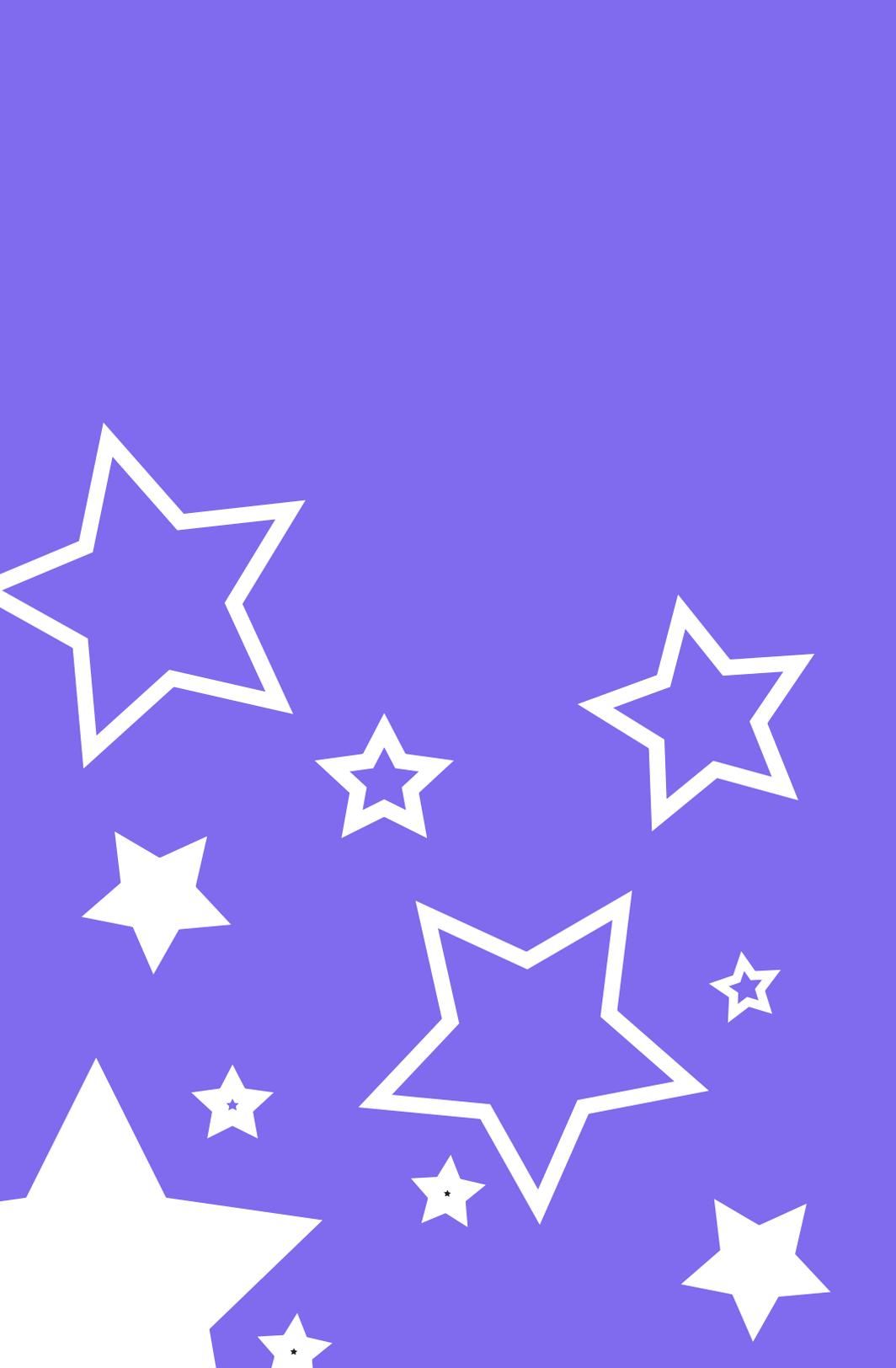




SABBATH



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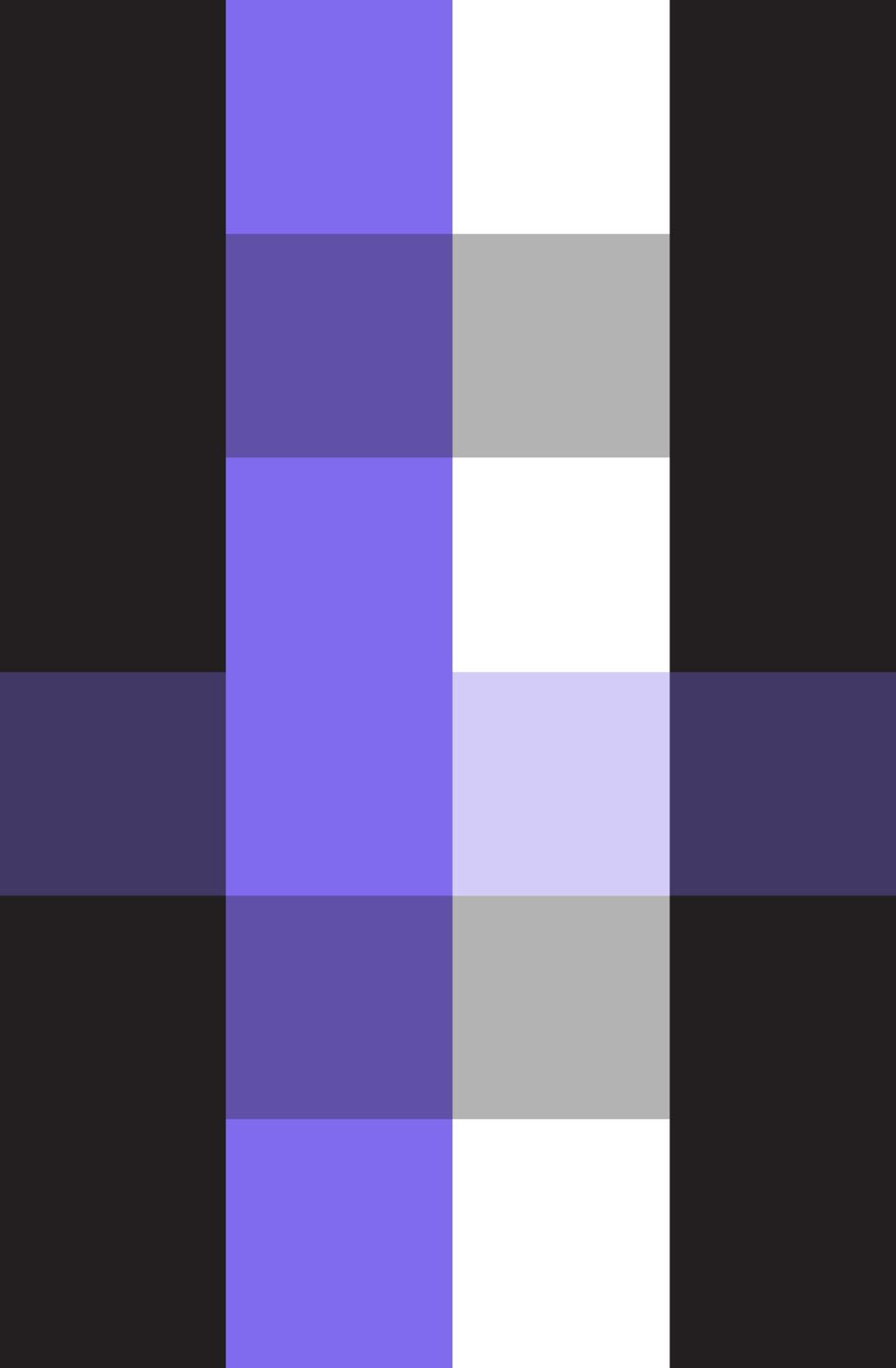
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L.I.F.E. JOURNALING METHOD

The Bible journaling method called LIFE Starter was developed to create an easy, yet effective way for people to study the Bible, remember what they read and allow their hearts to get ignited for Jesus Christ.

L.I.F.E. stands for Listen, Investigate, Focus and Engage.

L=Listen

In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses.

I=Investigate

Next, you investigate the context around the Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: Bible Study Tools, or Easy English Bible.

F=Focus

The next step is focusing on the text to make it applicable for your own life. What does the text mean today? What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read? Write out a couple sentences detailing what God is saying to you through the text.

E=Engage

The final step in the journaling process is engaging God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

The beautiful thing about this journaling method is that it is short and only takes a few minutes, and it can be done every time you read or study a passage.

SESSION 1

WHAT IS THE SABBATH?

Session #1 Teaching: What Is the Sabbath?

Why Did God Command a Day of Rest?

Sabbath comes from the word Shabbath which essentially, means “a day of rest.” God commanded a day of rest because He wants us to trust Him, and taking a Sabbath helps keep us from idolizing work and busyness. Also, we fall apart if we don’t rest.

In **Exodus 20:8-11**, the Bible encourages us to keep the Sabbath holy.

“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. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

Unlike the previous commandments, which the Bible seems to list and then move on to the next one, the writer (Moses) pauses here and gives an explanation about Sabbath:

- People work six days a week. (**Exodus 20:9**)
- On the seventh day, no one should work. Not your daughter, son, cattle, etc. (**Exodus 20:10**)
- God, when creating the world, took a day off to rest, so why can’t you? (**Exodus 20:11**)

During this Foundational Study, I will dive into the significance of Sabbaths, how the idea of this got skewed during Jesus-time, and what it looks like for Christians today to take a day off weekly.

Discuss or Ponder and Review Scripture:

•How do YOU keep the Sabbath holy today?

•Read Matthew 12:1-14 At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat (had to get their Wheaties). Jesus quickly points out a couple of places where these experts in the law had inconsistently applied their standard when it came to the Sabbath. And further challenged by suggesting they hadn't even read the law.

•Many people have treated the Sabbath so rigidly that they missed the whole point. **It isn't a problem just today. It was way back in Jesus' time. What made them so angry about what Jesus did here?**

This group of people, the Pharisees, held onto power by being the ones who held the law over people's heads. If Jesus was going to turn that system upside down this represented not just an upheaval of what they had always known, but it would usurp their power. And power they had. They controlled people's lives with these laws. The Pharisees literally made hundreds of rules that detailed how to do the Sabbath.

The religious leaders took the simple law of remembering the Sabbath and keeping it holy and used it for their power and prestige and control.

•Christians treat the Sabbath differently now than they used to.
Has theology changed or are we not applying it anymore?

Read Exodus 20:1-21

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

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Read Mark 2:23-28

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Read 1 John 5: 1-12

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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SESSION 2

WHY DID GOD GIVE US THE

Session #2 Teaching: Why did God give us the Sabbath?

Mark 2:27-28 tells us, “Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.” God seems to mandate a Sabbath for a number of reasons:

1. God wants us to trust Him.

When the Israelites wandered the desert before they reached the Promised Land, God would make manna, a type of bread-like substance that would give them sustenance, and quail rain from the sky (**Exodus 16**). Every day they would go out and collect that day’s rations and only that day’s rations. Any extra they tried to collect would end up full of maggots in the morning. But on the sixth day, God commanded them to gather twice as much so they wouldn’t work to get their food on the seventh day. Like the Israelites tended to do in the Old Testament, some didn’t listen, and they wound up hungry on the Sabbath because they didn’t collect enough the day before. God wants us to trust Him. He will provide for us, even if we don’t work one day of the week.

2. We fall apart if we don’t rest.

There were also practical reasons God commanded rest on the Sabbath. Those who work without taking a day’s break will encounter “*physical exhaustion and breakdown.*” We are not meant to work nonstop. When we work seven day weeks, we exhaust our brain and we cannot work properly. We become more stressed and wear ourselves out to the point we become susceptible to more illnesses.

3. We avoid idolatry when we take a Sabbath.

If we work and do nothing but work, we run the risk of placing it before God in terms of importance.

Discuss or Ponder and Review Scripture:

•Do YOU trust God with your time?

•Read Exodus 16. Think and discuss again about your willingness to trust God.

•Are you spreading yourself too thin and running ragged?

•Where does God fit into your priority list?

Prayer time:

Pray on your own, or with your group about trusting God and taking more intentional time to worship Him. Let God bring to mind specific areas of your life that consume you and make some practical adjustments to give Him more space.

Read Exodus 16

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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Read Proverbs 3

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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Read Hebrews 4:1-13

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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Read Colossians 3

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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SESSION 3

DOES SABBATH STILL MATTER TODAY?

Session #3 Teaching: Does Sabbath still matter today?

Hebrews 4:9-10 teach us that “9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10 for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.”

Is it even possible to have a Sabbath rest TODAY?

As I teach this LIFE Foundation Study here at PBC, I know that most people reading it will be working 50–60+ hour work weeks, just to make rent and living expenses in Northern Virginia. Many of you might have large families and even larger bills to pay, and you might not know if you will be able to pay it all this month. Some of you may work round-the-clock jobs that require you to be available seven days a week. It’s difficult to take a whole day off in our society, which expects us to run on full capacity all the time.

The Sabbath might look a little different for us. It might just mean avoiding checking emails on weekends to avoid that extra stress. For those who work round-the-clock jobs, this might mean concentrating a set number of hours and dedicating them to rest, even if at this current time you can’t designate 24 hours at once. Maybe designate 24 hours for the whole week and space it out. Ultimately, it matters that we dedicate 24 hours a week (whether spaced out or at once) to rest, rejuvenate, and trust God to provide when our work hours cannot.

I want to share this prayer with you as an encouragement to observe the Sabbath and keep it holy:

Lord of the Sabbath, I admit that I have not always observed the Sabbath as I should have. You created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. I should do the same. I acknowledge that you have a plan for me and that tomorrow’s workweek can wait. I know that no matter what happens, the tasks will get down if I steward my time well and observe periods of rest. Help me to withdraw from a workaholic mindset that my culture perpetuates. Although it is important to work hard and do everything as if I was working for you, I should also withdraw and rest in your presence as well. Jesus, you withdrew from the crowds to spend time to pray. May I do the same with my work and my work week. Amen.

Discuss or Ponder and Review Scripture:

•If you haven't already, open up your calendar and make some margin TODAY! Make a commitment to one other person in your life that will help hold you accountable to take a Sabbath day each week.

•Pray the prayer below for YOURSELF!

Prayer Time:

Say the prayer Cory prayed for you and your family...

Lord of the Sabbath, I admit that I have not always observed the Sabbath as I should have. You created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. I should do the same. I acknowledge that you have a plan for me and that tomorrow's workweek can wait. I know that no matter what happens, the tasks will get down if I steward my time well and observe periods of rest. Help me to withdraw from a workaholic mindset that my culture perpetuates. Although it is important to work hard and do everything as if I was working for you, I should also withdraw and rest in your presence as well. Jesus, you withdrew from the crowds to spend time to pray. May I do the same with my work and my work week. Amen.

Read Psalm 127

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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Read Ecclesiastes 4

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Read John 5:16-30

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Read Matthew 11:25-30

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SESSION 4

NEXT STEP: BREAKING BUSY

Session #4 Teaching: Breaking Busy for LIFE

Luke 10:38-42 takes us to the Home of Martha and Mary, “38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. 40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me! 41 “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, 42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

One of our most important LIFE Studies is about breaking the busy cycle that keeps us away from a fullness in Christ. If you identify yourself as someone who’s constantly “busy,” this is the LIFE Study for YOU! It’s time to ask yourself...In all of your busyness, are you living the life that God wants you to live? Does your busyness fulfill you, or are you living up to the goals and expectations of what others want for you? If your current busy schedule feels more like a burden than a blessing, chances are you’ve taken on too much that is healthy for you – or perhaps you’ve simply taken on too much of the wrong things. It may be time for you to let some of your busyness go. It’s time to let your priorities determine your schedule. The bottom line is that how you spend your time is a reflection of your priorities. God has already defined what should be the most important thing in your life, so now is the time to make time for God and the loving relationships that He has given you to cherish!

This LIFE Study starts with a “Busyness Assessment” prior to session #1 and then we answer the question; WHY busyness can be destructive for our Godly relationships? In session 2, we discuss where you find peace and where you find chaos in your current lifestyle and then talk about Biblical balance, and see if you are trying to “fit your Christianity” into your activity in the world.

The study will really challenge your thinking by asking, Which Lane Are You In? Are you simply fitting Jesus into your life or YOU fitting into Jesus? Much of the adjustments needed to make changes starts with defining and maybe redefining your values and decision making around integrity. Using what you learn allows you to apply these new strategies to future decision

Discuss or Ponder and Review Scripture:

•Are YOU ready to take the NEXT STEP?

Take the enclosed "Busyness Assessment," share it with your spouse or a friend and decide if Breaking Busy for LIFE is a study that YOU NEED TO PARTICIPATE IN.

Busyness Assessment

Don't think Jesus can't sympathize with your busyness. You have bills that need to be paid? Jesus had lepers who wanted to be healed. You have kids screaming for you? Jesus had demons calling Him by name. You have stress in your life? Jesus taught large crowds all over Judea and Galilee with people constantly trying to touch Him, trick Him, and kill Him. He had every reason to be run over by a hundred expectations and a thousand great opportunities, and yet, He stayed on mission. Jesus knew His priorities and stuck with them. Isn't this astounding? Think about it: Jesus wasn't just turning down an opportunity to play in a community sports league, He said NO to people who had diseases that He could have healed instantly. The disciples didn't understand why He wasn't attending to the urgent needs right in front of Him, but Jesus understood His mission. He was not driven by the needs of others, though He often stopped to help hurting people, He wasn't driven by the approval of others. Ultimately, Jesus was driven by His God-given mission. He knew His priorities and did not let many temptations of a busy life deter him from His task!

In our current culture, we, instead, normalize and even praise our common addiction to busyness. We expect successful people to be busy, so we present a persona of busyness in order to be perceived as successful.

Do you take pride in your busyness and your ability to multitask? The reality is that NO ONE does it well! God didn't build us to multitask. Research shows that multitasking is actually counterproductive! In fact busyness blinds us and dictates our schedule, so we don't slow down enough to think about each task. Oftentimes, being busy multitasking fills a need to accomplish tasks in order to feel worthy.

We seem to have an insatiable desire to always be one step ahead of where we are. It could be a coping mechanism to keep ourselves from thinking or feeling things we don't want to acknowledge, or an attempt to live up to the expectations of others. If you identify yourself as someone who's constantly "busy," sit down and ask yourself: In all of your busyness, are you living the life that God wants you to live? Does your busyness fulfill you, or are you living up to the goals and expectations of what others want for you? If your current busy schedule feels more like a burden than a blessing, chances are you've taken on too much than is healthy for you – or perhaps you've simply taken on too much of the wrong things. It may be time for you to let some of your busyness go.

It's time to let your priorities determine your schedule. You can actually accomplish more with less, if you focus your attention completely on each task at hand. Challenge yourself to be fully present in whatever you are doing in any given moment. Allow time for just "being," not focused on "doing" anything in particular. Make time for the joy God wants you to experience.

The bottom line is that how you spend your time is a reflection of your priorities. God has already defined what should be the most important thing in your life, so now is the time to make time for God and the loving relationships that He has given you to cherish!

Please answer these questions honestly (and have your spouse independently do the same): (10 being MOST important or satisfying and 1 being LEAST important or satisfying. **Be totally honest!**)

How important are the relationships in your life? Rate: _____

How important is your spiritual life? Rate: _____

How important is it to maintain your health? Rate: _____

How important is it to succeed in your career? Rate: _____

How important is it to have adequate financial resources? Rate: _____

How satisfied are you with your relationships? Rate: _____

How satisfied are you with your spiritual life? Rate: _____

How satisfied are you with your health? Rate: _____

How satisfied are you with your career? Rate: _____

How satisfied are you with your financial life?

Rate: _____

How well do you know what you spend your time on?

Rate: _____

Total up your scores:

Total: _____

Think hard and make bullet point notes of the following:

Things you **don't want** to do, and actually **don't need to do:**

Things you **don't want** to do, but actually **need to do:**

Things you **want to do** and actually **need to do:**

Things you **want to do** and actually **don't need to do:**
