

MODULE 3: SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN LEADERSHIP

INTRODUCTION



In this module, **Andy Saperstein** explains the process of spiritual formation and how you can pursue being formed in the way of Jesus.



Then, **Danielle Pathak** teaches how to develop an intentional, well-ordered life to sustain your health in leadership.

This module's teaching will help you answer two central questions:

1. How can I participate with God in a lifelong process of spiritual formation?
2. How will creating a Rule of Life help me flourish in my life and leadership?

SESSION 1: LIVING AN INTENTIONAL LIFE

Video Notes

1. To be a human being is to lead a life of spiritual formation. Whether we know it or not, or whether we like it or not, we will be spiritually formed, for good or ill. As Christians, we engage in practices of spiritual formation to be formed in the way of Jesus. Spiritual formation is the freely embraced process by which we, as disciples of Jesus Christ, participate with God through the work of his Spirit and the activity of his grace, in being conformed to the person and ways of Jesus in every aspect of our lives.

2. Spiritual formation in the way of Jesus is:

... a freely embraced process. It involves wanting to be formed in Jesus' way and pursuing it as a way of life. You engage in this when you recognize a fundamental desire for the way of Jesus and allow God to shape you in that work. You lead others in spiritual formation when you help others embrace that same desire and make that choice themselves, without coercion.

... about being a disciple of Jesus Christ. This entails being a student of Jesus, sitting at his feet as Mary did, and patterning your life after Him.

... participating with God as He shapes your life in His image. This requires effort, but it is something done by God and by God's grace, not something earned. It is God who works the real change that shapes your life.

... being conformed to Jesus in every aspect of your life (Psalm 24:1). In spiritual formation, you learn to do everything in the way that Jesus would do them if he were you.

3. Your spiritual formation takes place in four “cardinal directions of the spiritual life.” These are the four primary directions you face as you walk forward in your life with God.

- **The primary cardinal direction is upward orientation to God** (John 15; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). This upward direction is informed by the Scriptures and by prayer. To preserve and protect this godward orientation is the most important aspect of our life with God and of our own spiritual formation.
- **The second cardinal direction is your inward orientation, or attentiveness to your own life and your growth in grace** (1 Timothy 4:6; Psalm 139:23-24; Mark 12:30; Philippians 4:8). This involves paying attention to who you actually are, not who you used to be, wish you were, or imagine yourself to be. This is the only person who can meaningfully connect with God and be transformed. This requires a holistic awareness of your life: your heart, your soul, your mind, and your strength.
- **The third cardinal direction is the “one-another” of your relationships** (Ephesians 2:8). Your spiritual formation takes place in the context of healthy Christian community in the local church.
- **The fourth cardinal direction is the outward participation in God’s Kingdom in the world.** You are called to join God in His outward work of salvation, healing, justice, and redemption in the world, both in your community and to the ends of the earth.

4. **Living in the four cardinal directions leads to the right knowledge of God and yourself** (Romans 12:1-3; Psalm 103). You grow to see yourself through the eyes of the loving Creator and you as you were created in His image, and to see your own patterns of sin. You can continue to grow in this through establishing habits of living reflectively, reading scripture reflectively, and taking Sabbath rest.

SESSION 1: LIVING AN INTENTIONAL LIFE

Reflection Questions

1. Andy says we're always being spiritually formed, and following Jesus means choosing that path in all parts of life. How does this match or differ from how you used to think about spiritual formation?
2. Andy talks about growing in four directions: upward (toward God), inward (knowing yourself), with others (community), outward (impacting the world).

Do you feel like you're growing in all four areas? Is one stronger or weaker for you right now? Why?

3. Andy encourages us to meet God as we are today—not who we were or hope to be—and connect with Him through our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Is it easy or hard for you to bring your real, present self to God? Why?

Was anything he said about loving God with each of these parts of yourself especially encouraging or challenging?

4. Andy shared some ways to know God and yourself better: The Daily Review, Prayer in Seven Movements, Lectio Divina, and Sabbath. Which of these practices is new or interesting to you?

What would you like to try and why?

SESSION 2: BUILDING A RULE OF LIFE

Video Notes

1. **A well-ordered life is essential to leadership.** Why? Because, as a leader, a lot will come against you and challenge your well-being when you are in leadership. It is essential to discern what to say yes to and what to say no to, who you are in the world and who you are not, and what your calling is and what it is not.
2. **God, a God of order, set in order how you should live your life.** From the biblical examples of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, of Daniel, of Jesus, and more, you can see what it looks like to have an ordered life in which you connect with God, your own body and self, and with others, in an ordered and healthy way.
3. **There is a way to order your life so that, in restraining yourself, you can experience more of the fullness of what God has for you.** First developed by Benedict around 500 AD, the Rule of Life involves making specific commitments to God, ourselves, and others that we revisit over time as life changes.
4. **Having a Rule of Life provides structure and support to your life.** This structure is essential so that, as aspects of your life get heavy, good and bad, your life is held and protected in a healthier order.
 - *Your rule of life is unique to you.* It considers your stage or season of life and is also connected to your temperament and personality.
 - *Your Rule of Life is lived in community* and helps you understand how your life is interconnected with others.
 - *Your Rule of Life is meant to be revisited.* A once-a-year revisitation allows you to adjust your Rule of Life to better align with your stage of life and your relationships with others.

5. **Your Rule of Life equips you to resist how culture today pushes you toward more than you were created for.** Today, lives are fuller than ever—with more activities, more news or information, and so much anxiety being surfaced. People are living in spaces and places where they are pushing beyond what they are meant to be able to take on, even in churches.
6. **To build a Rule of Life, consider the cardinal directions:** upward with God, inward with ourselves, side-to-side to the relationships around us, and outward toward mission and calling. In each of these directions, examine: what is the reality of what is happening right now? What is the vision that God has for you in this area? What is one practice that you could engage with?
7. **A Rule of Life must be centered on the profound reality of the love of God** (Ephesians 3:16-21). Humans easily move into the realm of effort and striving. However, if you come to your practices daily knowing that the Lord loves you and is spurring you on, is the one who is inviting you into growth, and is the one who gives you wisdom in all of the decisions you make, you can truly thrive.

SESSION 2: BUILDING A RULE OF LIFE

Reflection Questions

1. Choose one of the biblical figures Danielle mentioned—Adam and Eve, Daniel, or Jesus. What was the mission or call God gave to them? How do you imagine they had to order their life in order to fulfill that mission? What areas seemed challenging for them, and what aspects of their lives can we celebrate as faithful and fruitful?
2. When you consider the idea that “God, a God of order, set in order how you should live your life,” what areas of your life currently align most with this truth? What areas feel disordered or misaligned—and how might a Rule of Life help bring them into balance?
3. In what ways have you noticed our culture pushing you to take on more than what God created you to take on? What do you sense God might be inviting you to say “no” to so that you can say a deeper “yes” to what truly matters?
4. Looking at the “four directions” of a Rule of Life—upward (God), inward (self), outward (mission), and side-to-side (others), spend some time reflecting on your life in these four cardinal directions by asking yourself:

What is the reality of what is happening right now in this area?

What is God's vision for me in this area?