

MENTOR GUIDE

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

Participant Reflection Questions

After watching the video, participants will answer or journal the following questions for reflection. Feel free to utilize these questions for discussion at your next Coaching Session.

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

Participant 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?

ACTIVATION ASSIGNMENT

Put This Into Practice

This module was all about living an intentional life and the importance of creating a Rule of Life. It is essential that your Rule of Life be centered in God's profound love for you, so that you can experience the fullness of what God has for you.

As you begin this time, take a few minutes to pray. Ask God to draw your attention to how He is calling you to grow.

Then, fill out the following worksheets that are designed to help you develop a Rule of Life. Make sure to work through the questions for each of the 4 areas.

AREA: LIFE WITH GOD

(Examples: my relationship with Jesus, rhythms of rest and stillness, worship/prayer)

Current reality: Write for a few minutes about how this area is currently thriving or not. Resist the temptation to shame yourself or sugarcoat the reality of what is. Be honest!

Vision: Spend a few minutes before God asking Him what He would like to speak to you about concerning this area of your life. Is there a word or phrase that comes to mind?

Season: How has your season challenged or inspired you to grow in your relationship with God?

Practice: Is there a specific spiritual discipline or practice that you can implement that helps with the journey of growth in your spiritual connection with God in this particular season? Just choose one that you can explore over the next 6 months. Find a time to regularly practice and assess (daily, weekly, monthly, or even quarterly). **Practices that are helpful in this area** are Sabbath, daily meditation, prayers of examen, solitude retreat, etc.

Scripture: Is there a scripture/verse that might ground you in this next season as you invest in your relationship with God in a specific way?

AREA: LIFE WITH YOURSELF

(Examples: caring for my body and sexuality, being in touch with my emotional healing, financial stewardship, ability to play/restore, etc.)

Current reality:

Vision:

Season:

Practice: Practices that are helpful in this area are daily reading, exercising your body, sleeping well, going to the doctor, working a budget for your money, seeing a therapist/counselor for your healing journey, etc.

Scripture:

AREA: LIFE WITH OTHERS

(Examples: friendship, family/kids, marriage, etc.)

Current reality:

Vision:

Season:

Practice: Practices that are helpful in this area are regular date nights with your spouse, time with kids, regular meaningful connections with old/new friends, having a meal every week with someone from your church community, etc.

Scripture:

AREA: LIFE ON MISSION

(Examples: work, ministry/calling, evangelism, justice, etc.)

Current reality:

Vision:

Season:

Practice: Practices that are helpful in this area are practicing generosity, sharing Jesus/testimony with a friend who doesn't have life with God, weekly commitment to serve at church, etc.

Scripture:

MENTOR SESSION GUIDE

While the content we've provided will be impactful for participants, as a VLE mentor, the time you spend helping participants process will be transformative. Please use this time to make thoughtful observations and be prepared to speak into their lives. This time together will provide many opportunities to have an "ICNU (I See In You) Conversation", which will be catalytic in their growth and development! Here is a sample agenda you might consider using for your time together:

Connection (5-10 minutes). This is a great opportunity for small talk, to warm up the conversation. You can ask how their week has been, or if they have anything exciting coming up.

Celebration (5-10 minutes). Ask them if they have seen God do something in their lives or ministry in the past two weeks that they'd like to share. This is an opportunity for you to affirm and reinforce the good growth that is happening.

Coaching Conversation (40 minutes). See Coaching Conversation Section on the next page. This portion will be specific to each module.

Care & Prayer (10-20 minutes). As you wrap up your time together, make space for the work of the Holy Spirit. This could look different every time, especially if you are meeting with an individual versus a group. If you are with an individual, you could ask if the Holy Spirit has brought anything to the surface for them, and then pray into that. If you are with a group, this might be an opportunity for a hot seat, or for participants to break off into pairs and pray for each other.

Closing Communication (5 minutes). This is the time to highlight the next module, important church events, or announcements, etc.

MODULE 3: COACHING CONVERSATION

Module 3: Spiritual Formation in Leadership explores how intentional spiritual practices shape us to lead like Jesus. Rather than focusing on outward results, Spiritual Formation in Leadership calls us to build our lives from the inside out. Participants are introduced to the concept of a Rule of Life—a sacred framework of habits, rhythms, and values that keep us rooted in God’s presence while leading in a demanding world. As leaders, our greatest influence flows from a life deeply formed in Christ.

1. Begin your time together by sharing part of your own formation story.

It is critical that you are honest here. If you struggle with spiritual rhythms, talk about it! If you have not yet used a Rule of Life, share how you feel convicted, how you want to grow, and what steps you are taking to get there. Remember: Mentoring is not about being perfect – it’s about being authentic!

- What rhythms have helped you stay spiritually grounded in seasons of leadership?
- Have you ever used a Rule of Life—or something similar—to guide your walk with Jesus?

2. Next, invite participants to reflect on their Activation Assignment by asking:

- What did you notice about the shape of your current spiritual life?
- Which practices came naturally to you, and which ones felt like a stretch?
- What did the Holy Spirit reveal as you began crafting a Rule of Life?

3. Unpack a few core themes from the video sessions to deepen reflection. Remember to share your own thoughts, stories, and experiences!

- Intentionality over passivity: What's one way you've been passive in your formation—and what would it look like to be more intentional?
- Habits that form us: Which spiritual practice are you drawn to in this season, and why?
- Formation for the long haul: What's one change you could make now that might sustain you years from now?

4. Draw the conversation toward application to their own leadership roles and areas of ministry:

- How does your spiritual formation shape the culture of your leadership?
- Where might you be leading from depletion instead of overflow?
- What's one new practice you could commit to—not as a rule, but as a way to remain in Christ?

5. Move into prayer and ministry time.

- Create space for stillness and listening prayer—ask Jesus to speak into one area of formation.
- Invite participants to share any invitations or convictions that surfaced during reflection.
- Bless the beginnings of their Rule of Life and pray for grace to sustain their rhythms.

Note: Rule of Life is something you will want to continue to follow up on in your monthly Coaching Conversations, i.e. “How is _____ going with your Rule of Life?”