

*Five Transformative Values
to Root Us in the Way of Jesus*



THE DEEPLY FORMED LIFE

DISCUSSION GUIDE



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WELCOME

HOW TO USE THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE

The goal of this discussion guide is to help you process—in community—the material from *The Deeply Formed Life*. The hope is that this resource will ground you deeper in Holy Scripture, while helping you give careful reflection to five critical areas of our life in Christ.

Before each group discussion, read the chapter from *The Deeply Formed Life* that corresponds with the session.



FORMING CONNECTION

At the start of each discussion, there will be a time to form connections with each other. More than just responding to questions, the hope is that this guide will be a resource to deepen relationships with those in your group.



BIBLE STUDY

Each chapter will have a passage of scripture to read and discuss. To grow in our life with God, reflecting on Holy Scripture is an indispensable practice.



PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION

In this section, you will have an opportunity to pay attention to what God is doing in your life. You will be invited to prayerfully consider and respond to the passage of scripture that was discussed.



TAKING THE NEXT STEP

In this part of the discussion guide, you will engage some of the content from *The Deeply Formed Life*. The questions do not capture all of the content in the chapter, so feel free to discuss other points that impacted you.



CLOSING PRAYER

As you close each discussion, spend a few minutes praying for one another.



CHAPTER 1

CONTEMPLATIVE RHYTHMS

MARK 1:29-35

²⁹As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. ³¹So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

³²That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

³⁵Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

CHAPTER 1

CONTEMPLATIVE RHYTHMS



FORMING CONNECTION (10 MINUTES)

How would you describe your current pace of life? What seasons of life have you lived at a pace that felt life-giving? What did it look like?



BIBLE STUDY (30 MINUTES)

MARK 1:29-35

Read the text. Which words or phrases stand out to you?

What are the current demands of life that are surrounding you?

What resonates within you as you see Jesus intentionally stepping away?

Find yourself in this story. What do you need to step away from? What would it look like for you to step away?

How does that make you feel?



PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION (TAKE 5 MINUTES TO RESPOND TO THIS QUESTION IN A JOURNAL OR IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW)

What do you sense God inviting you to today in light of this passage?



TAKING THE NEXT STEP (20 MINUTES)

Rich highlights the monastic tradition as an example of something our faith needs in the current world we live in. What aspects of this tradition resonate with you and why? What aspects of this tradition might be difficult for you to embrace and/or practice?

Slowing down requires us to courageously step away from the demands that crush our lives. What would it look like for you to begin to take intentional steps in this direction?



CLOSING PRAYER (CONCLUDE YOUR TIME BY TAKING A FEW MINUTES TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER)

“

*The inner
and outer
distractions
minimize
the capacity
for us to see
God's activity
around and
within us.*



CHAPTER 2

PRACTICES OF CONTEMPLATIVE RHYTHMS

JOHN 15:1-8

¹I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. ³You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.



FORMING CONNECTION (10 MINUTES)

In your faith journey, can you name any practices or disciplines that have helped you remain connected to God? If so, share one or two of them.



BIBLE STUDY (30 MINUTES)

JOHN 15:1-8

Read the text. Which words or phrases stand out to you?

Jesus is nearing the end of his life on earth in this chapter. Why do you think he shared these particular words with his disciples?

The word “abide/remain” comes up multiple times in this chapter and throughout the gospel of John. How do you hear that word in this moment of your life?



PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION (TAKE 5 MINUTES TO RESPOND TO THIS QUESTION IN A JOURNAL OR IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW)

What do you sense God inviting you to today in light of this passage?



TAKING THE NEXT STEP (20 MINUTES)

In this chapter, Rich highlights four “deeply formed practices” of Contemplative Rhythms to cultivate: Silent Prayer, Sabbath, Slow Reading of Scripture, and Stability.

Which of these practices have you engaged in some form in the past? How has it impacted your life?

Is there a practice you'd like to try more regularly in this season? What are you hoping will result?



CLOSING PRAYER (CONCLUDE YOUR TIME BY TAKING A FEW MINUTES TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER)

“

Sabbath is not just rest from making things. It's rest from the need to make something of ourselves.



CHAPTER 3

RACIAL RECONCILIATION

EPHESIANS 2:14-22

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷ He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

CHAPTER 3

RACIAL RECONCILIATION



FORMING CONNECTION (10 MINUTES)

When did you first come to the realization that we live in a society marked by racial hostility?



BIBLE STUDY (30 MINUTES)

EPHESIANS 2:14-22

Read the text. Which words or phrases stand out to you?

Verse 19 says that prior to Christ's work, the relationship between Jew and Gentile was that of "foreigners and strangers." To what degree do those words describe your relationship with others who are racially or ethnically different than you?

Paul notes that one of the results of the Cross is the creation of a new family. How does this understanding of the Cross shape the way you live in the world?



PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION (TAKE 5 MINUTES TO RESPOND TO THIS QUESTION IN A JOURNAL OR IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW)

What do you sense God inviting you to today in light of this passage?



TAKING THE NEXT STEP (20 MINUTES)

Rich underscores two racial layers we must attend to (individual and institutional) in order to make progress addressing this issue. Which of these two areas do you have more difficulty addressing? Why?

According to Rich, what are some assumptions we make about racial reconciliation and how that is achieved?

Rich writes, "Reconciliation in community will always cost us something, and in Christ the barriers that separate us can come down in his name." What is God inviting us to sacrifice for the sake of reconciliation?e you hoping will result?



CLOSING PRAYER (CONCLUDE YOUR TIME BY TAKING A FEW MINUTES TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER)



*The Cross of
Christ isn't
just a bridge
that gets us
to God; it's a
sledgehammer
that breaks
down walls
that separate
us.*



CHAPTER 4

PRACTICES OF RACIAL RECONCILIATION

REVELATION 7:9-10

⁹After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰And they cried out in a loud voice:

*“Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb.”*

CHAPTER 4

PRACTICES OF RACIAL RECONCILIATION



FORMING CONNECTION (10 MINUTES)

How do you define the word “racism?” Has this definition changed over time?



BIBLE STUDY (30 MINUTES)

REVELATION 7:9-10

Read the text. Which words or phrases stand out to you?

This scripture passage is a sneak preview of a future time when people from all nations and ethnicities are gathered. What are some of the obstacles that keep church communities from gathering in this way?

Revelation 7 reveals that in the age to come, we will retain our ethnic and national identities. How does that make you feel? Why?



PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION (TAKE 5 MINUTES TO RESPOND TO THIS QUESTION IN A JOURNAL OR IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW)

What do you sense God inviting you to today in light of this passage?



TAKING THE NEXT STEP (20 MINUTES)

Rich highlights seven “racial habits” to cultivate on the journey of being deeply formed. What are these habits? Which two habits are you most drawn to in this season? Why?

In light of this chapter, what are you beginning to realize with better clarity?



CLOSING PRAYER (CONCLUDE YOUR TIME BY TAKING A FEW MINUTES TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER)



When it comes to conversations on race, our level of offendability often reveals the level of our maturity.



CHAPTER 5

INTERIOR EXAMINATION

PSALM 139:1-3, 23-24

*¹ You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me.*

*² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.*

*³ You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.*

*²³ Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

*²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

CHAPTER 5

INTERIOR EXAMINATION



FORMING CONNECTION (10 MINUTES)

When you were growing up, how did your family “do emotions?” What emotions were encouraged or discouraged?



BIBLE STUDY (30 MINUTES)

PSALM 139:1-3, 23-24

Read the text. Which words or phrases stand out to you?

In this psalm, David asks God to search inside of him. To what degree in your journey of faith have you invited God to help you look within?

Share about a time in your life when you practiced interior examination in ways that led to wholeness.

In this chapter Rich says, “limited reflection usually leads to dangerous reaction.” How have you experienced this in your own life?



PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION (TAKE 5 MINUTES TO RESPOND TO THIS QUESTION IN A JOURNAL OR IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW)

What do you sense God inviting you to today in light of this passage?



TAKING THE NEXT STEP (20 MINUTES)

In this chapter, busyness is seen as an impediment to interior examination. Have you experienced this? What might be some adjustments to make to do the work of interior examination?

Compartmentalization in this chapter is about cutting off parts of ourselves, which leads us to greater fragmentation, away from the whole selves God has created us to be. What are the parts (e.g. difficult emotions, various aspects of yourself, etc.) that you have had a hard time integrating into your life with God and the surrounding world?



CLOSING PRAYER (CONCLUDE YOUR TIME BY TAKING A FEW MINUTES TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER)

“

*It is
impossible to
experience
wholeness
while we
regularly
split off from
our “part-
selves.”*



CHAPTER 6

PRACTICES OF INTERIOR EXAMINATION

PSALM 139:1-3, 23-24

¹ *You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me.*

² *You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.*

³ *You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.*

²³ *Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

²⁴ *See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.*



FORMING CONNECTION (10 MINUTES)

What are one or two “positive legacies” you have received from your family of origin that you celebrate? What are one or two “negative legacies” that you must continue to work through?



BIBLE STUDY (30 MINUTES)

2 CORINTHIANS 6:3-10

Read the text. Which words or phrases stand out to you?

In this passage, Paul is listing the various hardships that have come his way. If you were to write an autobiographical sketch of your own hardships, what are some words you would use?

Paul specifically joins two words together in verse 10 (sorrow and rejoicing). It's often the case that we feel the need to choose one over the other. How is it possible to hold sorrow and rejoicing together?



PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION (TAKE 5 MINUTES TO RESPOND TO THIS QUESTION IN A JOURNAL OR IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW)

What do you sense God inviting you to today in light of this passage?



TAKING THE NEXT STEP (20 MINUTES)

Rich offers a series of questions to help navigate the debilitating reactions we often have when we are under stress:

- a) What happened?
- b) What am I feeling?
- c) What is the story I'm telling myself?
- d) What does the gospel say?
- e) What counter-instinctual action is needed?

Is there a recent situation in which you can use this framework to help you gain greater internal freedom?

Which of the four practices (examining family of origin, anxiety, feelings, reactions) are particularly important for you in this season? Why?



CLOSING PRAYER (CONCLUDE YOUR TIME BY TAKING A FEW MINUTES TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER)

“

*In the
examination
of our
reactions,
we live from
a place
of depth,
wisdom, and
discernment.*



CHAPTER 7

SEXUAL WHOLENESS

GENESIS 3:1-10

³ Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

⁴ “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

CHAPTER 7

SEXUAL WHOLENESS



FORMING CONNECTION (10 MINUTES)

When you were growing up, how did your parents handle (or not handle) the “birds and the bees” conversation? How may have their approach shaped the way you view sexuality?



BIBLE STUDY (30 MINUTES)

GENESIS 3:1-10

Read the text. Which words or phrases from this story stand out to you?

In this chapter, after Adam and Eve eat the fruit from the tree prohibited by God, they became aware (perhaps overly preoccupied) with their bodies. How has this story continued to be lived out in our culture? In your own life?

Adam and Eve hide from God, fearful and carrying shame. How does fear and shame about our bodies impact our relationship with God, ourselves, and others?



PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION (TAKE 5 MINUTES TO RESPOND TO THIS QUESTION IN A JOURNAL OR IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW)

What do you sense God inviting you to today in light of this passage?



TAKING THE NEXT STEP (20 MINUTES)

Rich highlights the three diets of sexual formation (starvation, fast-food and the banquet). Which of these diets do you need to prayerfully wrestle with? Why?

What would it look like for you to be “naked and unashamed” as it pertains to your relationship with your body?



CLOSING PRAYER (CONCLUDE YOUR TIME BY TAKING A FEW MINUTES TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER)

“

*To sum it up,
our sexuality
is perverted
by a
powerful root
of shame.*



CHAPTER 8

PRACTICES OF SEXUAL WHOLENESS

1 THESSALONIANS 4:3-5

³ It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should learn to control your own body[a] in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵ not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God;



FORMING CONNECTION (10 MINUTES)

What are the spoken or unspoken messages from the Church regarding sexuality that has impacted the way you see this issue?



BIBLE STUDY (30 MINUTES)

1 THESSALONIANS 4:3-5

Read the text. Which words or phrases stand out to you?

Paul's words are direct, urgent and culturally provocative for our day. How does one seek to live out these words without going down the path of legalism, shame, or judgmentalism?

Paul writes that we have to "control our body." How do you hear these words?



PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION (TAKE 5 MINUTES TO RESPOND TO THIS QUESTION IN A JOURNAL OR IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW)

What do you sense God inviting you to today in light of this passage?



TAKING THE NEXT STEP (20 MINUTES)

In this chapter, there are 5 practices for sexual wholeness. Which of these practices are most pressing for you in this season of life?

In light of these two chapters, what has impacted you most? What adjustments are needed as a result?



CLOSING PRAYER (CONCLUDE YOUR TIME BY TAKING A FEW MINUTES TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER)

“

When we hold on to secrets, our bodies often manifest the poison we've stored in our psyches.



CHAPTER 9

MISSIONAL PRESENCE

JOHN 20:19-23

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”



FORMING CONNECTION (10 MINUTES)

If God told you to be a missionary in another part of the world, where would you want God to send you?
Where would you not want to go?



BIBLE STUDY (30 MINUTES)

JOHN 20:19-23

Read the text. Which words or phrases stand out to you?

Jesus encounters his disciples while they are afraid. When you think of engaging in mission, are there any fears that you wrestle with?

What do you think Jesus means when he says, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you?"



PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION (TAKE 5 MINUTES TO RESPOND TO THIS QUESTION IN A JOURNAL OR IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW)

What do you sense God inviting you to today in light of this passage?



TAKING THE NEXT STEP (20 MINUTES)

Rich writes about two aspects of mission (missional presence and missional posture) that considers how God engages the world. How might your missional engagement change if you knew God was truly with all and for all?

Who are the people and where are the spaces that you sense God leading you to be more missionally intentional? What practical step can you take towards that end?



CLOSING PRAYER (CONCLUDE YOUR TIME BY TAKING A FEW MINUTES TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER)

“

*There is
never a
moment
when God
isn't moving
toward the
world in love.*



CHAPTER 10

PRACTICES OF MISSIONAL PRESENCE

MARK 2:13-17

¹³ Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. ¹⁴ As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

¹⁵ While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶ When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

¹⁷ On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

CHAPTER 10

PRACTICES OF MISSIONAL PRESENCE



FORMING CONNECTION (10 MINUTES)

How have you been taught to understand the word “mission?” How has this understanding helped or hindered the way you live out your faith?



BIBLE STUDY (30 MINUTES)

MARK 2:13-17

Read the text. Which words or phrases stand out to you?

Much of the mission of Jesus takes place around food. Why is eating together a powerful environment to connect with others, especially missionally?

Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” What are some implications for mission in light of this verse?



PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTION (TAKE 5 MINUTES TO RESPOND TO THIS QUESTION IN A JOURNAL OR IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW)

What do you sense God inviting you to today in light of this passage?



TAKING THE NEXT STEP (20 MINUTES)

Rich shares 4 practices of missional presence: hospitality, justice, commissioning in our work, and announcing the gospel. Which of these practices, if any, come easily to you? Which ones, if any, do you find difficult to live out?

What practical step can you take to engage the world missionally in this next season of your life?



CLOSING PRAYER (CONCLUDE YOUR TIME BY TAKING A FEW MINUTES TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER)

“

*We are all
hardwired
to care
about
justice.*



