



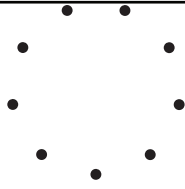
The Practicing the Way Course

Companion Guide



An Eight-Session Primer
on Spiritual Formation

John Mark Comer and Practicing the Way



The Practicing the Way Course

Companion Guide

An Eight-Session Primer
on Spiritual Formation



WaterBrook

John Mark Comer and Practicing the Way

Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. (www.zondervan.com). The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica Inc.™

A WaterBrook Trade Paperback Original

Copyright © 2024 by Practicing the Way

All rights reserved.

Published in the United States by WaterBrook, an imprint of Random House, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.

WATERBROOK and colophon are registered trademarks of Penguin Random House LLC.

Originally self-published by Practicing the Way (practicingtheway.org) in 2024.

Published in association with Yates & Yates, www.yates2.com.

All photos courtesy of Practicing the Way.

Trade Paperback ISBN 978-0-593-60273-7

Ebook ISBN 978-0-593-60274-4

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper.

waterbrookmultnomah.com

ScoutAutomatedPrintCode

Most WaterBrook books are available at special quantity discounts for bulk purchase for premiums, fundraising, and corporate and educational needs by organizations, churches, and businesses. Special books or book excerpts also can be created to fit specific needs. For details, contact specialmarketscms@penguinrandomhouse.com.



Contents

GETTING STARTED

Welcome	04
How to Run This Course	05
Before You Begin: The Spiritual Health Reflection	09

THE EIGHT SESSIONS

Session 01: Following Jesus	13
Session 02: Formation (Part 01)	29
Session 03: Formation (Part 02)	51
Session 04: The Practices	67
Session 05: Meeting God in Pain and Suffering	83
Session 06: Healing from Sin	99
Session 07: Crafting a Rule of Life	115
Session 08: Life Together	135

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

The Practices	152
Recommended Reading	153
The Circle	154

PART 01

Getting Started

Welcome

In the fourth century, the desert father St. Sarapion traveled from his monastery in Egypt to visit a woman in the city of Rome. The woman had become widely known for her devotion to Jesus, but, unlike Sarapion, she did not retreat into the desert. She stayed firmly planted in the noise and chaos of urban life.

When Sarapion found her, she was quietly sitting in her room.

He asked her, “Why are you sitting here?”

She answered, “I’m not sitting, I am on a journey.”

Following Jesus has long been likened to a spiritual journey. When Jesus invited his first disciples to “follow” him on the “way,” he was simultaneously saying that discipleship to him is a lifelong path.

This Course is just a *primer*. It’s designed to get you started on the journey of spiritual formation, help you get *unstuck* if you’ve stalled out, or just guide you into taking your next step. Ultimately, its goal is to train you to live as an apprentice of Jesus: to be with Jesus, become like him, and do as he did.

Whatever prompted you to come on this Course, welcome. We’re so happy you’re here.

May this experience lay the foundation for a life of apprenticeship to Jesus that you can build on for decades to come.

—John Mark Comer and Practicing the Way

How to Run This Course

A few things you need to know

- 01 This Course is designed to be done in community, whether with a few friends around a table, with your small group, in a larger class format, or with your entire church.
- 02 The Course is eight sessions long. We recommend meeting together every week or every other week.
- 03 You will all need a copy of this Companion Guide. You can purchase a print or ebook version from your preferred book retailer or find a free digital PDF version by signing up at link.practictheway.org/course-signup. We recommend the print version so you can stay away from your devices during the practices, as well as take notes during each session. But we realize that digital works better for some.
- 04 Each session should take about one to two hours, depending on how long you give for discussion and whether you engage in the optional after-video discussion. See the Sample Session on the following page.

Sample session

Here is what a typical session could look like.

Welcome

Welcome the group and open in prayer.

Discussion 01: Practice reflection (15-20 min.)

Process your previous week's practice in community with the questions in the Guide.

Course Video, Part 01 (20 min.)

Watch Part 1 of the video.

Discussion 02: Group conversation (15-30 min.)

Pause the video when indicated for a group-wide conversation.

Course Video, Part 02 (10 min.)

Watch Part 2 of the video.

Discussion 03: After the video (10-15 min.) (Optional)

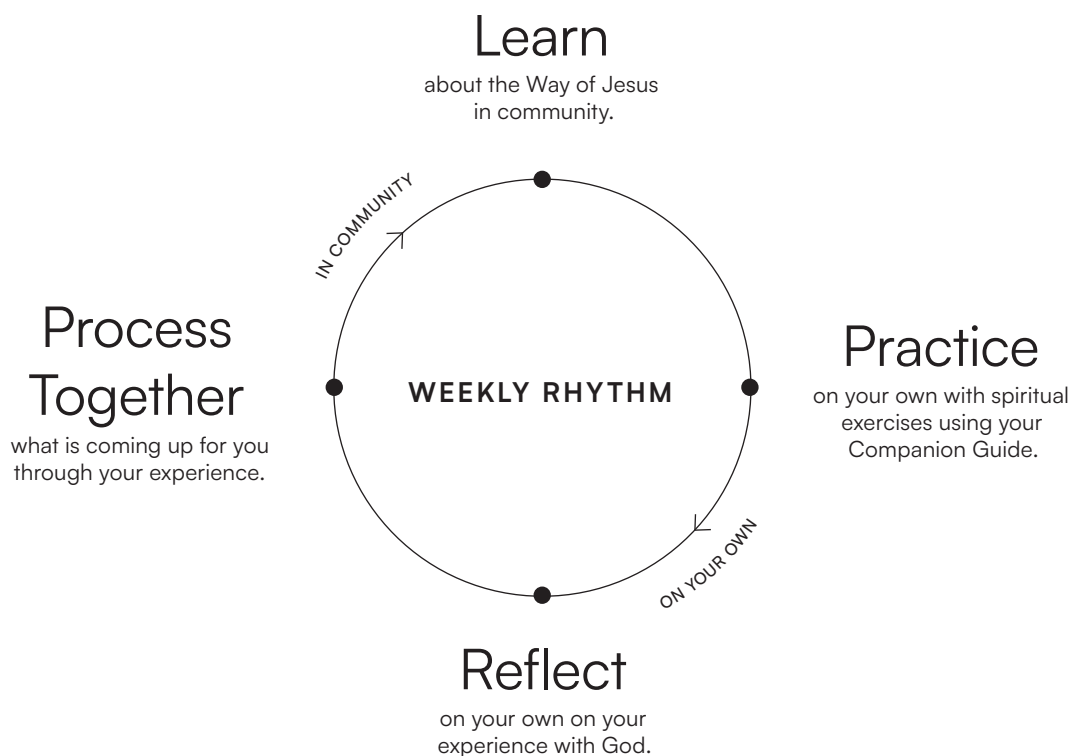
If you'd like, we have additional questions in the Guide for continued conversation. They are geared toward the coming week's practice.

Prayer to close

Close by praying the liturgy in the Guide, or however you choose.

The Practicing the Way Course is designed to work in a variety of group sizes and environments. For that reason, your gatherings may include additional elements like a meal or worship time or follow a structure slightly different than this sample. Please adapt as you see fit.

The weekly rhythm

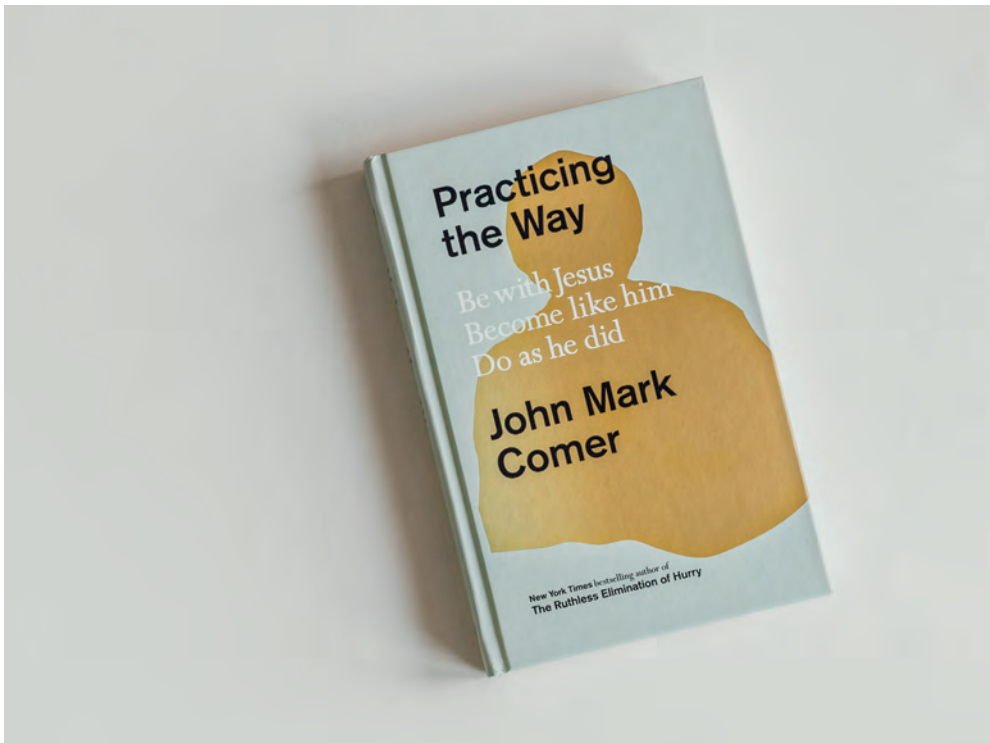


- 01 **Learn:** Gather together as a community for an interactive experience of learning about the Way of Jesus through teaching, storytelling, and discussion. Bring your Guide to the session and follow along.
- 02 **Practice:** On your own, before the next session, go and “put it into practice,” as Jesus himself said. We will provide weekly spiritual disciplines and spiritual exercises, as well as recommended resources to go deeper.
- 03 **Reflect:** Reflection is key to spiritual formation. After your practice and before the next session, set aside 10 to 15 minutes to reflect on your experience. Reflection questions are included in this Guide at the end of each session.
- 04 **Process together:** When you come back together, begin by sharing your reflections with your group. This moment is crucial, because we need each other to process our life before God and make sense of our stories. If you are meeting in a larger group, you will need to break into smaller sub-groups for this conversation so everyone has a chance to share.

The *Practicing the Way* book

We highly recommend reading the book *Practicing the Way* by John Mark Comer alongside this Course, as it will greatly enhance your learning experience. Find out more at practicingtheway.org/book.

Each session's readings are laid out in the On Your Own sections in this Guide.



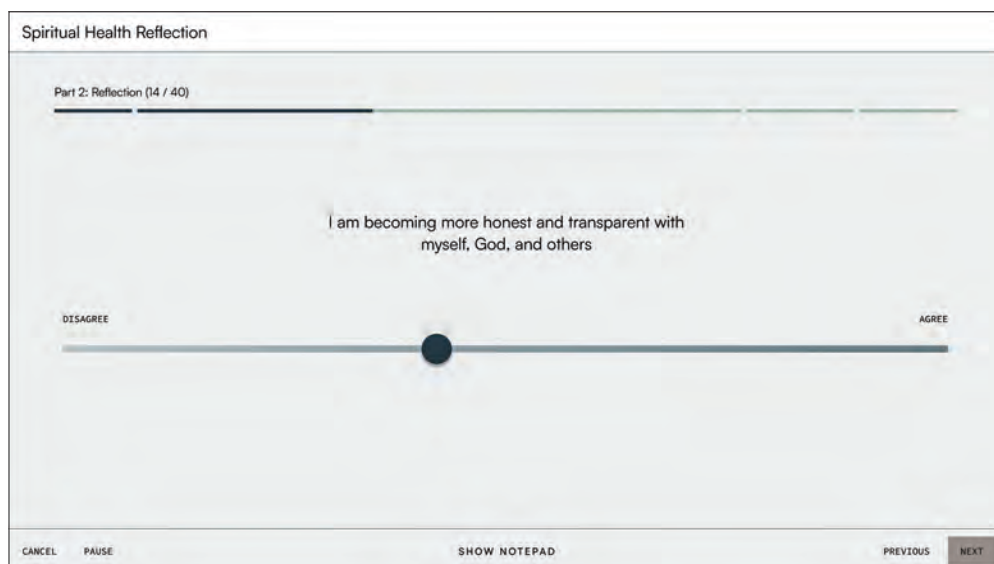
BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The Spiritual Health Reflection

One final note: Before you begin Session 01, please set aside 20 to 30 minutes and take the Spiritual Health Reflection. This is a self-assessment we developed in partnership with pastors and leading experts in spiritual formation. It's designed to help you reflect on the health of your soul, in order to better name Jesus' invitations to you as you follow the Way.

You can come back to the Spiritual Health Reflection as often as you'd like (we recommend one to two times a year) to chart your growth and continue to move forward on your spiritual journey.

To access the Spiritual Health Reflection, visit practicingtheway.org/reflection, and create an account, and answer the prompt questions slowly and prayerfully.



Spiritual Health Reflection

Part 2: Reflection (14 / 40)

I am becoming more honest and transparent with myself, God, and others

DISAGREE AGREE

CANCEL PAUSE SHOW NOTEPAD PREVIOUS NEXT

