

Life Worth Living | Week Six

Living with Intention: Making It Stick

Gather

As you gather for this final week, take a few minutes to reconnect and reflect on the conversations you've shared over these past weeks. Remember to listen well, make room for everyone, and resist the temptation to offer advice or solve one another's problems.

Looking back at last week: How has thinking about mortality, resurrection, and hope influenced the way you see your own life? Has anything from our conversations stayed with you?

This Week: From Reflection to Intention

Throughout *Life Worth Living*, we have explored some of life's biggest questions: What makes a good life? What matters most? What should we hope for? And how should we live?

Patrick has appreciated the intellectual framework the book provides for exploring these questions. But understanding what matters is only the beginning. **How do we actually live in ways that reflect what we believe?**

In our recent study of Ecclesiastes, we've encountered a similar invitation. Life is fleeting, our time is limited, and much is beyond our control. Yet recognizing our mortality need not lead to despair. It can invite us to live more intentionally, paying attention to what truly matters.

The Gospel adds an essential dimension of hope. We do not have to create a meaningful life entirely through our own efforts. We are already loved by God and invited to live in response to that love.

Making It Stick: Practices That Shape Our Lives

The final chapter explores different approaches to turning our hopes and intentions into the way we actually live.

Rituals and Habits

Confucius emphasized the importance of ritual in shaping our character and relationships. Repeated practices help form who we become, often in ways we barely notice.

We already have rituals throughout our days: how we make coffee, begin our mornings, prepare for bed, or reach for our phones. Some habits support the lives we hope to live. Others may pull us away from them.

Worship is also a ritual that shapes us. But worship isn't meant to remain confined to Sunday mornings. How might the practices of worship, including gratitude, confession, prayer, generosity, and attentiveness to God, shape the rest of our week?

Spiritual Practices

Christian traditions offer a variety of practices that help us become more attentive to God and live with greater intention. Three possibilities include:

- **The Examen:** A prayerful practice associated with Ignatius of Loyola that invites us to review our day with gratitude and honesty. We notice where we experienced God's presence, our emotional responses, where we acted in love, and where we might respond differently. We then look toward tomorrow, asking for God's guidance.
- **Centering Prayer:** A practice of silent prayer in which we seek to be present to God, gently letting go of distracting thoughts rather than filling our prayer time with words or requests.
- **Journaling:** Taking time to write about our experiences, hopes, questions, and prayers. Writing can help us notice patterns, recognize growth, and reflect on where God may be at work.

Community That Helps Us Grow

We rarely make meaningful changes entirely on our own. Twelve-step programs offer one example of how honest reflection, shared commitments, accountability, and mutual support can help people move toward lasting change.

The book describes the importance of a "**sticky community**," people who help us hold onto our hopes and commitments when everyday life threatens to pull us away from them.

At its best, the church is precisely this kind of community. We encourage one another, pray for one another, and help each other live more faithfully.

Discuss Together

1. What rituals or habits currently shape your daily life? Are they helping you become the person you hope to be?
2. What spiritual practices have helped you grow in faith or live more intentionally? Is there a new practice you might want to explore?
3. What would it look like for the practices of Sunday worship to carry into the rest of your week?

4. Who are the people who help you remain faithful to your hopes and commitments? How might the church become a more meaningful "sticky community" for you and others?
5. Looking back over these six weeks, **what idea, question, or realization has stayed with you?** Has anything shifted in your understanding of a life worth living?
6. **What are your hopes moving forward? What is one next step you might take toward living more intentionally?**

Closing: Praying for One Another

As your group concludes, take a few moments for each person to share a hope, intention, or next step that has emerged from these conversations. What would you like your group to pray for as you seek to live more fully into the life God has given you?

Consider how you might continue encouraging one another beyond these six weeks.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, thank you for the gift of life and for the people who accompany us along the way. Help us move beyond simply knowing what matters to living in ways that reflect your love. Give us wisdom to recognize what is important, courage to make changes, and grace when we fall short. Shape our habits, deepen our faith, and strengthen our communities so that together we might live lives of love, purpose, gratitude, and hope. Amen.

Resources for Going Deeper

- [Yale Center for Faith & Culture Podcast](#) featuring conversations with Miroslav Volf and others about faith, flourishing, and living well.
- [Centering Prayer](#) from Contemplative Outreach, including instructions for beginning this practice.
- [The Examen: Finding the Places of Peace in Our Lives](#) from First Presbyterian Church of Asheville.