

# Journey Markers: Core Practices

Read the following statements that reflect core practices in the life of a Christ-follower. Under each statement you'll find five corresponding sentences describing different phases we all go through. Mark the corresponding sentence that best reflects where you are on the journey.

## When it comes to my focus in living...

- I find myself wondering about God and sometimes say a quick prayer for guidance if I come across a situation or decision that I cannot figure out on my own.
- I know it is important to keep God's priorities in mind and I'm working on doing that more every week. There are weeks that I am more focused than others.
- I deeply value God's priorities in my everyday life. My focus now extends beyond just Sunday worship.
- I evaluate every decision, action, lifestyle choice, or financial decision in light of what I think is best for God's purposes.
- I used to feel like I was more focused on God and His priorities than I do right now.

## When it comes to worship...

- I try to make it to church as my busy schedule allows.
- Worship is a 24-7 lifestyle. Every move I make throughout the day is a reflection on God. I try to regard my daily life as an offering to God out of love and respect.
- My worship experience is wrapped up in the worship services I attend regularly on Sunday mornings. Worship is a time that I am spiritually fed and my needs are met.
- I used to experience worship more deeply than I have recently.
- Corporate worship is vitally important to me and I'm exploring the practice of worship beyond Sunday morning.

## When it comes to Bible study...

- I have a regularly scheduled time when I personally read and meditate on the Bible. I've also discovered the best format for me personally to study the Bible.
- I read my Bible at least once a week and sometimes two and three times a week. I'm learning how best to study the Bible, too.
- I used to have a greater passion for reading the Bible than I do right now.
- On occasion I pick up my Bible or a devotional guide and read at home, but I have no regular time for Bible study that is routine yet.
- I'm intrigued by the Bible and would like to learn much more about what is written in it. My study of the Bible takes place primarily on Sunday morning as I hear the sermon.

### **When it comes to prayer...**

- I pray to God when I have problems or needs – or when my family or friends have needs.
- Talking with God is almost a way of life with me. I find myself talking with Him or listening for him frequently throughout my day.
- My prayers used to feel more personal and significant than they have recently.
- I pray with my family at mealtimes, with my children at bedtime, and on other special occasions. I don't pray much in private on my own.
- I have a set time each day that I spend working through a format for prayer that keeps me focused.

### **When it comes to Biblical community...**

- I have a close circle of Christian friends that I meet with regularly to explore our lives and encourage each other in becoming more like Christ.
- I don't have many Christian friends that I see regularly. I have a few people I like to say hi to on Sunday mornings.
- I have a few friends from church that I get together with from time to time for social outings.
- I have been in small groups at church before and I have enjoyed them. Right now I am between groups and have no circle of friends that encourage me in my Christian life.
- I am involved in a group right now in which I feel comfortable but not necessarily close to the other members. We discuss the Bible and often open up about personal things in our own lives.

### **When it comes to talking about my faith...**

- I am becoming more comfortable talking about my faith with others. If the opportunity presents itself, I am getting better at telling people about our church and inviting them to come check it out.
- I'm still wrestling through my own faith in God so I find myself asking others about what it means to have faith.
- My faith is such an integral part of my life that not talking about it with others would seem odd.
- I used to be more engaged in talking to others, both Christians and non-Christians, about my faith but haven't done so as much recently.
- I find that I look for opportunities to share my faith in Christ with others. Describing the difference Christ is making in my life is becoming more and more natural for me.

### **When it comes to investing my time...**

- I'm so slammed for time that I have no ability to offer any time to fulfill volunteer needs at our church.
- I am now able to prioritize my demanding schedule in such a way that time to volunteer in the Kingdom, whether at church or intentionally in the community, is readily available. My time is not my own.
- I am increasingly drawn to offering my discretionary time in ways that benefit other people and God than I am to using my time entirely for my own personal interests.
- I used to be more involved in volunteer opportunities than I am right now.
- I will offer my time as particular short-term opportunities come available. I pick and choose depending on my schedule and interests.

### **When it comes to offering my resources...**

- I used to be dedicated in my tithes and offerings but have recently slipped back from that commitment.
- I sometimes give out of whatever is available at the end of the week as the offering plate is passed on Sunday morning.
- I am faithfully giving ten percent of my gross income to God and I trust God that as I give to him first my needs will be met.
- I build my budget around basic necessities and plans (purchases, vacations, etc.). If there is anything left, I am glad to budget that to God and his work. I struggle to understand how giving a significant amount of money (10% or more of my income) could actually work.
- In addition to tithing, I am working toward becoming completely debt-free so that I can more faithfully spend the money that God entrusts to me.

### **When it comes to my spiritual gifts...**

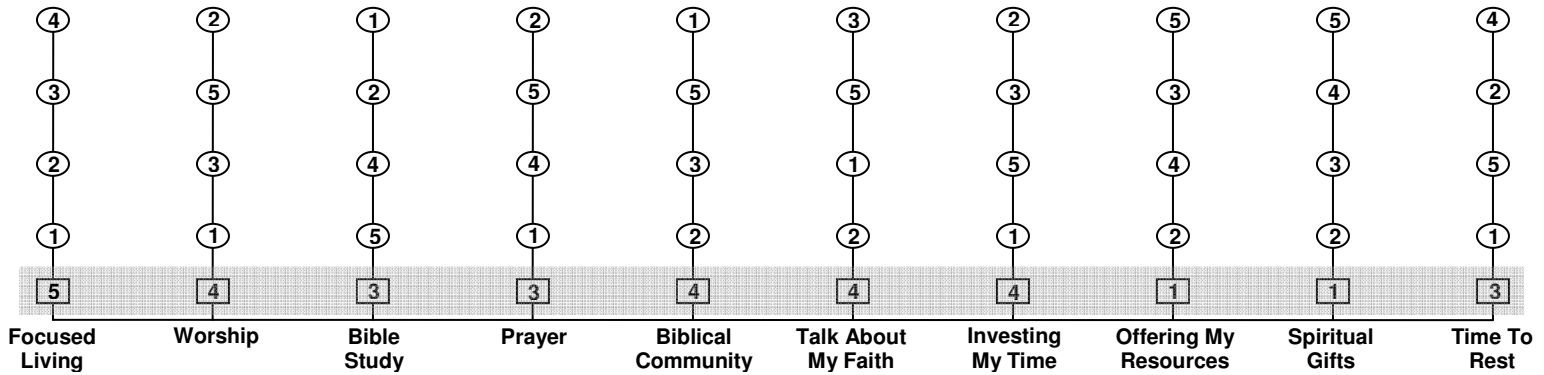
- I once used my spiritual gifts more than I do right now.
- I don't really understand what abilities I have that could be of any use to God.
- I am experimenting with some areas of service and volunteering related to my faith, and I am gaining an understanding of my strengths and weaknesses and how God can use me best.
- I have received feedback from scripture study and Christian friends. I know what my strengths and passions are and I am actively finding an outlet for those qualities in service to God and others.
- I know what God created me for and am passionate about accomplishing that purpose while I'm alive.

### **When it comes to taking time to rest...**

- I feel a lot of stress in my life and am often hurried. I often wonder if it has to be this busy and hectic and sometimes dream of taking time away.
- I am taking intentional weekly time to rest, trusting that God is in control. I believe that God has provided enough time in his 7-day week design to do all I need to do: work, play, and rest.
- I used to take time to rest but have recently fallen into the busy and hectic cycle again.
- Knowing deeply of my need to trust God, I frequently go beyond my weekly Sabbath to include other meaningful ways to rest: intentional solitude, extended silence, etc.
- I have begun to understand the importance of taking time to rest and try to do so but often work, home projects, and/or kids' activities get in the way.

## Assessment Results: Core Practices

Now that you've completed the assessment on your core practices you may transfer your answers onto the graph below. For example, if you selected the first response under the *Worship* statement you would find the number 1 on the *Worship* line and fill in that bubble. Continue with each line below until you've completed the entire section. You may then choose to connect your dots to reveal areas of progress in your journey (reflected by higher dots) and areas in which you may want to seek ways to grow (reflected by lower dots). Boxes in the shaded area designate a marker in which you seem to be stalled (see the next page for more information).



## Journey Markers: Core Practices

### Focused Living

**I focus on God and His priorities for my life.**

Matthew 6:33, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

### Worship

**I worship God for who He is and to honor Him in the way He deserves.**

Psalm 95:1-7, "Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song. For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods. In His hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to Him. The sea is His, for He made it, and His hands formed the dry land. Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for He is our God and we are the people of His pasture, the flock under His care."

### Bible Study

**I study the Bible to know God, to know the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.**

Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

### Prayer

**I pray to God to know Him, to seek His direction for my daily life, and to depend on Him.**

Psalm 66:16-20, "Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what He has done for me. I cried out to Him with my mouth; His praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld His love from me!"

### Biblical Community

**I have meaningful relationships with other Christians through which we encourage each other to accomplish God's purposes.**

Acts 2:44-47, "All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as He had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

### Talk About My Faith

**I talk openly about my faith.**

Ephesians 6:19-20, "Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should."

### Investing My Time

**I intentionally invest my time to accomplish God's purposes.**

Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

### Offering My Resources

**I gladly surrender my resources to accomplish God's purposes.**

2 Corinthians 8:7, "But just as you excel in everything, in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us, see that you also excel in this grace of giving."

### Spiritual Gifts

**I know and use my God-given abilities and opportunities.**

Romans 12:4-6, "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us."

### Time to Rest

**I rest to keep my life in balance and to show my trust that God is in control.**

Mark 2:27, "Then [Jesus] said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.'"

## ***More Information about the Journey Assessment...***

As you move along on a journey it is helpful to have mile markers that indicate how far you have come and how much farther you have to go. This is true as you make the life journey of following Christ. How do you know if you are making progress or not? Where can you go to find some encouragement along the way?

We call this evaluation tool ***The Journey Assessment***. As you've worked through this you've hopefully been able to see your progress in becoming a Christ-like person. The 30 **markers** are divided into groups of 10. The first ten deal with the truths or **Beliefs** of the Christian faith; the second 10 list Christ-like **Virtues**; and the final 10 are **Practices** or habits that are characteristic of Christ-followers. Each marker is followed by 5 self-evaluation statements. You've sized yourself up and decided which of these 5 progressions best describe where you are in relation to each marker. The 5 progression statements reflect the following mindsets:

- **I am Centered – Jesus has complete influence in this area of my life**
- **I am Close – I'm following Jesus in this area of my life more closely every day**
- **I am Growing – I have taken the plunge and I am moving ahead**
- **I am Exploring – I'm still on the fringe and making up my mind about this one**
- **I am Stalled – I was growing in this area but lately I seem to have run out of gas**

Hopefully you've been totally open with yourself as you've worked through this assessment. Answering with what you think are the right or expected values will not have been helpful to you. Brutal honesty will have produced the most productive assessment of yourself. You may find that you are at different stages of growth in different facets of life. You may be *exploring* in the area of giving, but *close* or *centered* in your willingness to serve. Don't be concerned with back and forth in the number values – that is to be expected.

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Now that you have your results make a plan to discuss the outcomes with trusted friends who are serious about growing in a relationship with Christ. Look at your present progress and determine what needs to happen in order to keep moving forward in areas of life. Give your friends the same encouragement they give you as together you plot your course in allowing the reality of Christ to flow through your life.

We **strongly** suggest that you evaluate your assessment with other people. If you are presently in a Lifegroup (and we can help you find one if you are not), leaders will be facilitating discussions related to this ***Journey Assessment***. Even if your group is not participating in ***The Journey*** curriculum you can still ask your leader if your group could take and discuss this assessment.

The Journey Markers have been adapted by Parkside Christian Church from original material from Pantego Bible Church. The recent *Reveal* research completed by the Willow Creek Association has informed our compilation of the 5 progression statements under each Journey Marker.