



Slow. Steady. Faith.



RCB SPIRITUAL FORMATION GUIDE | FEBRUARY 2023

An introduction to *Slow. Steady. Faith.* These guides are designed to help you take **the next small step** toward spiritual flourishing. When it comes to growth in our walks with God, many of us get stuck because we don't know where to start, we struggle to make space for life-giving practices amid our busyness, or we set ambitious goals that are too hard to follow through on in our current season of life.

The heart behind *Slow. Steady. Faith.* is to **focus on and celebrate taking small steps toward God**—by seeking His presence, imitating His character, and mirroring His love and goodness to those around us.

As you read this month's guide, ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate **the practice** (what to do) and **the rhythm** (when and how often to do it) that will be most helpful to you. Remember, these practices are not rungs on a ladder where the goal is to climb higher by doing "more." Rather, they are meant to be simple ways to shape your life so that God is increasingly placed at the center. This means that in a busy season a once-a-month practice can provide as much value as a daily practice might in a more spacious season—the Holy Spirit can use either to infuse more of God's abundant life into your life.

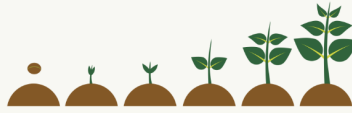
To make the most of this guide, set aside time at the start of each month to pray over these questions:

- ❖ **Which practice is standing out to me?** How might God be answering a prayer or calling me into a deeper relationship with Him by inviting me into this practice?
- ❖ **How can I make this practice part of my everyday life?** Are there steps of preparation I need to take to clear time and space for this? Do I already have a regular rhythm that I can incorporate this practice into?
- ❖ **What does it look like to take *slow, steady* steps toward this practice?** During a busy or emotionally weighty season, you may want to make the practice "smaller"—for instance, instead of a daily rhythm, consider twice a week. During a spacious or growth-oriented season, you may want to pick a practice/ rhythm that will stretch you by devoting more of your time, energy, or resources to it—for instance, instead of setting aside 15 minutes for a practice, try 30 or 45.

Remember to make prayer a part of every practice. Some guides will focus more on our personal relationship with God while others will call us to engage more with our community. Approach each practice as an invitation to draw near to God and lift up words of praise, petition, repentance, and thanksgiving as you go.

Lastly, remember that God celebrates the small and faithful (Mark 12:41-44). By taking the next small step that is within reach today, you are planting a seed of faith, trusting God to nourish it and cause it to expand and flourish (Luke 13:18-19). As we engage in these practices, may Jesus be glorified and may we find that when we draw near to God, He is faithful to meet us there (James 4:8).

Creating Space for... Silence & Stillness



In the coming months, our themes will focus on “creating space” for different rhythms that lend themselves to the Lenten and Easter season. In observing Lent, we imitate Jesus in his forty days of resisting temptation and prayer in the wilderness. Lent is a time to restore vibrancy and vision in our walks with God through a renewed focus on spiritual practices like praying, fasting, and giving.

In February, we will focus on *silence* and *stillness*. These are not ends in themselves but a means to hear God more clearly and allow ourselves to be present to our thoughts, experiences, and surroundings. As you begin, pray that the space would help you better discern how God speaks to you and leads you.



Practice: Designate a period of time where you “fast” from the visual and auditory stimulation that comes with living in our digital age. Use any free time this might create for prayer, contemplation, or simply rest.

Rhythm: Pick one day each week when you can feasibly disconnect from background noise (music, podcasts, TV, etc) or screens (smartphone, tablet, TV, etc). If your work/school commitments make this difficult, consider splitting up the fast between multiple days: set aside half a day on the weekend or 2-3 weeknights.



Silence | Set aside one day each week to “fast” from background noise.

- ❖ **Fasting:** From waking to sleeping, spend as much of the day as possible in silence, especially from background noise like music, podcasts, TV, etc.
- ❖ **Filling:** Set aside time in the morning, midday, and in the evening to read and pray through a psalm (we recommend Psalm 62). You might also use the time to journal your experience of the silence—what did you notice that you might not have noticed otherwise, what was challenging about the silence, what tended to fill your thoughts, etc?



Stillness | Set aside one day each week to “fast” from screens.

- ❖ **Fasting:** From waking to sleeping, avoid using screens as much as possible.
- ❖ **Filling:** Plan activities you can engage in that stimulate you in other ways—read a book, work on an art project, write a letter to a friend, spend time with your community, etc.



Other tips:

- ❖ **Consistency:** Consider practicing your fast every Wednesday.
- ❖ **Community:** Coordinate with your community (CG, etc.) to fast together on the same day and set aside time to share your reflections on this experience.
- ❖ **Intentionality:** Plan in advance the steps you will need to take to make the fast possible. When are the times throughout the day that you typically turn to screens and entertainment? How can you limit access/set boundaries to make it easier to stick to your fast? How can you make use of the space to orient your attention on God or others?