



# Slow. Steady. Faith.



RCB SPIRITUAL FORMATION GUIDE | JANUARY 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).

## Theme: Attentiveness



To prepare our hearts for spiritual growth this year, this guide focuses on **attentiveness—creating space to become aware of God’s presence and notice His activity in our lives**. To abide in Jesus and walk in His ways, we must first surrender our time and our priorities to Him. As you begin your practice, ask the Holy Spirit to help you grow in attentiveness to Jesus and what He is inviting you into today.



**Practice:** Set aside time to focus on the presence of God with you and ask Him to speak to you through His Word and through the events of your daily life.

**Rhythm:** Pick a time each day when you can create at least 15 minutes of uninterrupted space to be alone with God. As an alternative, you might consider setting aside 30 minutes twice a week or 1 hour each weekend, adjusting the practice to fit that time and space.



**Morning Devotion** | Set aside 15 minutes each day to focus your attention on God:

- ❖ **5 minutes of silence** to orient yourself to God’s presence with you. To keep your focus on God, you might choose a theme word, such as an attribute or name of God, to repeat to yourself.
- ❖ **5 minutes to meditate on Scripture** by reading 5-10 verses. Notice the word, phrase, or idea that stands out to you and reflect on how it is relevant to your life today.
- ❖ **5 minutes for prayer** based on this Scripture and your reflections. End by asking God to be with you in any needs or challenges of the day ahead.



**Evening Examen** | Set aside 15 minutes at the end of each day and ask the Holy Spirit to show you where He was at work in your life through these 5 reflections:

- ❖ **Become aware of God’s presence.** Begin in prayer. Offer the events of the day up to the Lord, asking him for clarity and understanding.
- ❖ **Review the day with gratitude.** Revisit your day with God and notice the small joys and delights. Note 2 or 3 ways you experienced evidence of God’s grace and give Him thanks.
- ❖ **Pay attention to your emotions.** Emotions are a spontaneous reaction to and interpretation of our experiences. Reflecting on them provides an opportunity to invite the Spirit to affirm or reinterpret how we view the events of our lives. Reflect on the positive and negative feelings of the day and ask God what He wants to show you about and through these emotions.
- ❖ **Choose one piece of your day and pray from it.** Ask the Lord to direct you to something that happened in your day that is particularly important: an interaction with another person, a realization you had, a moment marked by a clear emotion, etc. Allow a prayer to rise organically from this reflection, whether of praise, repentance, intercession, or gratitude.
- ❖ **Look toward tomorrow.** Ask God to lead you through tomorrow’s joys and challenges. Pay attention to emotions that come up—from excitement to anxiety—and turn these into prayers.



**Resources:** Use the app [Lectio 365](#) for a guided time of reflection, Scripture reading, and prayer. See this [Guide to the Daily Examen](#) for another variation and additional context on this practice.