

Building a Sustainable Inner Life

A Grow Guide by Iron Forums

Introduction

As leaders, building a sustainable inner life is essential for our spiritual, emotional, and physical health. In Dee's talk, she highlighted three key areas that are foundational to maintaining this inner life: spiritual disciplines, supportive relationships, and self-care. This worksheet will guide you through each area, helping you assess where you are and identify practical ways to cultivate a deeper, more resilient inner life in Christ. Remember that the goal is to develop a life rooted in Christ, aligned with God's will, and able to steward both the challenges and opportunities you face in leadership.

In addition to Dee's content, we will draw from key insights in *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer and *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Peter Scazzero. Both resources challenge us to slow down, develop healthier rhythms, and cultivate emotional and spiritual maturity that leads to thriving leadership.

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I. Cultivating Spiritual Disciplines

Spiritual disciplines are essential for nurturing your relationship with God and cultivating a healthy inner life. These disciplines help center your heart, mind, and actions around Christ, allowing you to stay grounded in the midst of life's demands.

Key Disciplines to Reflect On:

1. Prayer

Prayer is foundational for intimacy with God and for seeking His guidance in our lives. It allows us to pour out our hearts before God, receive His wisdom, and stay connected to Him in all circumstances.

- Scripture:
"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)
"And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words." (Matthew 6:7)
- Reflection Questions:
 - How consistently do you pray, and what kind of prayer life do you have? Is it more about talking or listening?
 - In what ways do you feel that prayer has transformed your heart and your leadership?
 - How do you make space for God in the midst of a busy schedule? Is your prayer life a rushed routine or a time of true communion?
- Exercise:
The 15-Minute Morning Prayer Challenge
Set aside 15 minutes each morning to pray, focusing on listening to God. Use this time to reflect on areas where you need His guidance and ask Him to help you cultivate a deeper heart connection with Him.

2. Bible Study

Regular Bible study allows the Word of God to transform our hearts and minds. It's through Scripture that God speaks directly to us, revealing His will and purpose for our lives.

- Scripture:
"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)
"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." (James 1:22)
- Reflection Questions:
 - Do you engage with Scripture daily, or is it sporadic in your life?
 - How deeply does the Word shape your decisions/your leadership?
 - In what ways do you allow the Bible to speak into the hidden areas of your life that need healing or growth?
- Exercise:
Choose a passage that speaks to leadership or inner growth (e.g., Matthew 5:16, James 1:5, Proverbs 3:5-6). Reflect on how this passage challenges you as a leader, and write down one actionable insight you can apply immediately.

3. Journaling

Journaling is a powerful tool for processing emotions, reflecting on spiritual insights, and communicating with God. It helps us make sense of our inner world and discern God's voice amidst the noise of daily life.

- Scripture:
"I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways." (Psalm 119:15)
"Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks." (Luke 6:45)
- Reflection Questions:
 - How often do you journal, and what do you focus on when you do?
 - Do you use journaling as a way to process emotions, thoughts, and struggles?
 - How has journaling helped you grow spiritually and emotionally? What can you learn from your past entries?

- Exercise:

- Weekly Journal Reflection

- At the end of each week, spend 10 minutes journaling about the emotional and spiritual highs and lows of your week. What were your struggles? What did God teach you? Use this journal to track growth and identify areas needing attention.

4. Fasting

Fasting is a discipline that helps us realign our desires with God's will. It frees us from distractions and focuses our hearts on God alone.

- Scripture:

- "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting." (Matthew 6:16)

- "But he answered, 'It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:4)

- Reflection Questions:

- How often do you fast, and why?
 - What have you learned about yourself and your dependence on God through fasting?
 - Are there specific areas of your life where God is calling you to surrender through fasting?

- Exercise:

- Monthly Fast Commitment

- Choose one day per month to fast from food or other distractions (social media, entertainment, etc.) and dedicate that time to prayer and meditation on God's Word.

Prayer for Spiritual Disciplines:

"Father, help me cultivate a heart that seeks You in prayer, study, and fasting. Teach me to live with a disciplined spirit, always desiring communion with You. May these disciplines draw me nearer to You each day."

II. Having Supportive Relationships

Supportive relationships are vital to building a sustainable inner life. We were not created to lead in isolation. God provides us with mentors, coaches, and trusted friends to encourage us, challenge us, and hold us accountable in our journey of faith.

Key Areas of Focus:

1. Mentors & Coaches

Having a mentor or coach is crucial for growth. These relationships offer guidance, wisdom, and support in challenging times, helping us become the leaders God has called us to be.

- Scripture:
"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." (Proverbs 27:17)
"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."
(Proverbs 15:22)
- Reflection Questions:
 - Do you have a mentor or coach who speaks into your life? Do you tap into your fellow Iron Forums members?
 - How often do you seek their counsel? What specific areas of your life are they speaking into?
 - How open are you to receiving correction or advice from them?
- Exercise:
Mentorship Check-In
Identify someone you trust as a mentor or coach, and set up a meeting to discuss your spiritual and leadership growth. Ask them to speak into one specific area of your life.

2. Confession & Accountability

Confession and accountability are key to maintaining emotional and spiritual health. Safe spaces for vulnerability foster growth and healing, and they help us keep our hearts pure before God.

- Scripture:
"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so

that you may be healed." (James 5:16)

"The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray." (Proverbs 12:26)

- Reflection Questions:

- Who do you confide in about your struggles? How vulnerable are you in your monthly Snapshot during your Forum?
- Is there anyone you can be fully transparent with, without fear of judgment?
- How does accountability help you maintain spiritual and emotional health?

- Exercise:

Monthly Snapshot Check-In

Use the Snapshot time in Iron Forums to reflect on areas of growth and accountability. Invite someone from the group to check in on your spiritual health each month (between Forums).

3. Iron Forums Community

Iron Forums is a community designed to encourage growth through shared accountability. Utilize this space for authentic reflection and support in your leadership and spiritual journey.

- Reflection Questions:

- How actively do you participate in the Iron Forums Community?
- Are you open with your group about struggles and growth areas?
- What steps can you take to deepen your engagement with others?

- Exercise:

Commit to reaching out to two other members in the next week. Offer support, ask for prayer, and discuss one area where you could benefit from their accountability.

Prayer for Supportive Relationships:

"Lord, thank You for the community You've placed in my life. Help me be vulnerable, open, and accountable to those around me. Teach me how to build and nurture relationships that reflect Your love and grace."

III. Self-Care: Setting Healthy Boundaries

Self-care is not about self-indulgence—it's about stewarding your physical, emotional, and spiritual health so that you can lead and serve effectively. A sustainable inner life requires creating space for rest, reflection, and renewal. Leaders who neglect self-care eventually burn out, harming not just themselves but those they lead.

Key Areas of Focus:

1. Sabbath & Rest

In *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, John Mark Comer challenges us to reclaim the biblical practice of Sabbath—not as a rigid rule, but as a life-giving rhythm of work and rest. The modern world glorifies busyness, but Jesus calls us to a different way of living—one marked by peace, joy, and trust in God.

- Scripture:
 - "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."* (Matthew 11:28)
 - "Be still, and know that I am God."* (Psalm 46:10)
- Reflection Questions:
 - Do you regularly take time to slow down and rest, or do you feel guilty when you do?
 - What does your current rhythm of work and rest look like? Does it reflect trust in God?
 - If you could design an ideal Sabbath practice, what would it include?
- Exercise:

Design Your Sabbath – Plan a day (or portion of a day) where you unplug from work, technology, and productivity. Spend time doing things that

restore your soul—prayer, nature, worship, or simply being with loved ones. Share your plan with your group and commit to implementing it.

2. Emotional & Mental Health

In *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, Peter Scazzero emphasizes that spiritual maturity cannot be separated from emotional health. Ignoring emotions, avoiding hard conversations, or overworking as a way to escape discomfort leads to inner exhaustion. True growth requires self-awareness and intentional care for your mental and emotional well-being.

- Scripture:
“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”
(Proverbs 4:23)
“A heart at peace gives life to the body.” (Proverbs 14:30)
- Reflection Questions:
 - How do you typically handle stress, conflict, and difficult emotions?
 - Do you have healthy outlets for processing emotions (journaling, therapy, spiritual direction, trusted friendships)?
 - Where do you need to invite God’s healing into your emotional life?
- Exercise:
Emotional Check-In – Write down three emotions you have felt most frequently in the past month. What might these emotions be revealing about your inner life? Discuss with a trusted person or your Forum.

3. Physical Health & Rhythms

Your body is the vessel through which you fulfill your calling. Caring for your physical health is an act of stewardship and worship. Sleep, exercise, and nutrition all impact your energy, focus, and resilience.

- Scripture:
“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.” (1

Corinthians 6:19)

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31)

- Reflection Questions:
 - How well are you taking care of your body in this season?
 - Are there unhealthy habits (overeating, lack of sleep, stress-induced neglect) that are diminishing your energy and focus?
 - What small, sustainable change could you make to care for your physical health better?
 - Exercise:

One Small Change Challenge – Identify one small, achievable habit you can implement this week (e.g., walking 20 minutes a day, cutting out one unhealthy food, or going to bed earlier). Share it with your Forum for accountability.
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Putting It All Together: Your Sustainable Inner Life Plan

After working through these sections, take a moment to reflect on your next steps.

- What are the top three areas where you need to grow in cultivating a sustainable inner life?
- What is one practical step you can take in each area this month?
- Who will you invite to hold you accountable in this journey?

Final Prayer:

"Lord, help me to build a life that is not just productive, but deeply rooted in You. Teach me to rest, to care for my body, and to nurture my emotions in a way that honors You. Let my leadership come from a place of wholeness, not exhaustion. In Jesus' name, amen."