

3: ORGANICS

Jesus lived with an awe-inspiring rhythm. Despite the enormity of His life and mission, you just do not see Him straining to get through His days. He is like water freely moving over rocks. He is like a married couple, deeply in love, moving in perfect rhythm on the dance floor. Jesus' life flowed. And it isn't that He had no issues. He had plenty, and to a degree that neither you nor I will endure. Nevertheless, He moved gracefully, intently, and powerfully through His days. He lived in the fullness of every moment. He did not shut Himself down emotionally or live with some version of a hands-off approach to life. He did not simply let things roll off His back. Remarkably, He was perfectly, fully vested in every moment.

When you watch an expert at what they do, what they do appears effortless. An expert downhill skier makes skiing look so easy you think you could do it. A professional chef makes an excellent dish that tastes fantastic. What happens when you try to emulate them? You try skiing and wreck. You try cooking and start fires! Jesus was THE life expert. He was smooth. He made it look easy. In the last chapter we understood that part of His ease came from seeing the world correctly. The light was on and He saw where all the furniture was located. He never stumbled around trying to feel His way.

In this chapter, we're going to work through organics: the connection among beliefs, practices, and experiences. Jesus had a seamless connection between His beliefs, practices, and experiences. There was no disconnect, compartmentalization, missing pieces, or confusion. Like water moving from a root to a vine to a branch and then producing fruit, Jesus' beliefs flowed fluidly to His practices, which easily yielded fruit.

Have you ever driven a car that's out of alignment? You hold the steering wheel straight, but the car veers to the left or right. How does that happen? Your steering column and your wheels are not in alignment! If you are out of alignment and continue holding the wheel straight, you're going to get into a wreck. Many people's lives are wrecks, even Christians' lives, because their beliefs and practices are out of alignment. Through organics we're going to discover our alignment issues.

BRANCHES AND SHEEP

Jesus trains His disciples about the power of an aligned life using the image of a vine and a branch. In John 15:5 Jesus says, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him will bear much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing." Let's break this down according to beliefs, practices, and experiences.

Let's take a deeper look at Jesus' vine/branch analogy through our organic lens of beliefs, practices, and results. At the level of belief, He is a vine and we are branches. As the vine, He takes on all the responsibilities of the vine. He is the provider. As branches, we are to take on all the responsibilities of the branch. We are receivers. We must believe that He can and will supply all that we need at all times in everything. We must believe that our role is to receive what the vine has for us. We must believe that all we are is a branch.

If we believe these things, then appropriate practices will *naturally* follow. If we believe in the vine/branch, then we will by nature abide. To abide is to remain in something. A branch is designed to remain in, to continually be connected to, a vine. Nothing is more central to the life of the branch than its connection to the vine. The branch wants to be an expert at abiding in the vine. Therefore, if we believe we are a branch, then we will abide naturally and joyfully. Abiding is what we have been designed to do.

Consequently, according to Jesus, if we believe and practice the vine/branch relationship, then we will experience abundant fruit in our lives, and we will bear much fruit. When God Himself abides in us and we in Him, we will be abundant. We will clearly and consistently bear fruit upon fruit upon fruit!

A man I know loves the Lord. He has walked with God for years. He could defend the faith well and sought opportunities to do so. However, his practices were always inconsistent. Regularly getting into the Word of God was a chore. Because he believed many of the right things, it took a while to discover what was happening in his life. We found that while his beliefs were correct, they were incomplete and out-of-order. He had a strong relationship with Jesus but did not understand the Spirit well. And his devotion to his children often competed with his devotion to the Lord. His inconsistency in his practices disappeared when we addressed his beliefs and he experienced abundant, natural fruit for the first time in his faith.

RESULTS

PRACTICES

BELIEFS

Every one of us has a system of beliefs and practices. Through our relationship with Jesus, He changes our systems. He transforms our beliefs (Romans 12:2) and practices to produce His life in us.

With this understanding of abundance, we are now ready to explore various conditions of our beliefs, practices, and results that keep us from Jesus' promised abundance. Then we will learn from Jesus the foundational beliefs and practices of the Way of Rest.

BELIEFS

Beliefs are the truths that define life for us. They can move from simple to complex, and as the foundation of our lives they are very powerful. Jesus says, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but will have eternal life” (John 3:16). The impact of truly believing this one statement is staggering. Accepting this as true will determine the trajectory of a person's life. Beliefs form the lens through which we interpret and understand life. They are foundational.

Unfortunately, not all of our beliefs are accurate. Often, they're a mix of six different conditions: incorrect, inconsistent, incomplete, out-of-order, wounded, or bound. The lines among these are certainly blurred, but the distinctions can help to bring needed clarity.

No matter how faithful and sincere our practices are, when they are placed on top of beliefs that are in one of these conditions, we will not experience the rest and promises of God in our lives. As disciples, we want our beliefs to be clear. As we go to make disciples, we want to observe the belief condition of those we disciple so that we can train them appropriately.

INCORRECT BELIEFS

Incorrect beliefs occur when we accept concepts as truth that are, in fact, lies. An example of incorrect beliefs is found in the counsel Job's friends gave to him throughout the book of Job. Job's friends tried to convince him that he must have done something wrong to have experienced the loss he suffered. They adhered to the concept that everything that happens in life is either a blessing because of good works or retribution for bad works. This belief is based on a lie that denies God's grace and mercy and misunderstands His sovereignty.

When we make a mistake and continue to beat ourselves up for that mistake, we're allowing the same incorrect belief to guide our path. This practice of beating ourselves up is based on an incorrect belief that we deserved what we got or that God is mad at us. Therefore, we believe we will become holier if we suffer longer. This is an example of a lie based on an incorrect belief.

INCONSISTENT BELIEFS

Inconsistent beliefs occur when we believe God is faithful in some things but not in others, and when we believe God is faithful sometimes but not all the time. A person believes God is faithful in his or her finances in the morning, but by the afternoon he or she has forgotten God's faithfulness and is filled with anxiety. Another person believes God is faithful in his or her marriage but not his or her career. God is not sometimes, or in some things, faithful. He is faithful all the time and in all things. Inconsistent beliefs are notorious contributors to a confused faith.

INCOMPLETE BELIEFS

Incomplete beliefs occur when a person does not believe everything Scripture says. We see incomplete belief predominantly occur in two areas in the United States: Trinitarian balance and spiritual warfare. We will cover these in-depth later.

Simply, Trinitarian balance is the need to live in an appropriate relationship with each person of the Trinity: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Spiritual warfare is engaging the demonic in the war of the Kingdoms. An example was given in Chapter 1 of a woman warring against the negativity in her mind. Her attack could easily have been demonic. Had she not believed in spiritual warfare, she would have been left defenseless. Inadequacy in Trinitarian balance, spiritual warfare, and other principles are examples of incomplete beliefs.

OUT-OF-ORDER BELIEFS

This condition is marked by an inaccurate prioritizing of belief in Jesus in our lives. Even though a person believes in Christ, his or her belief in Christ is not their number-one priority. Jesus says that we are to love the Lord so much that we "hate" our fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters. We are to have no other gods but God Himself. God is a jealous God. We can study the Bible all we want, but God must be first in our hearts or we will not succeed in our belief.

WOUNDED BELIEFS

Wounded beliefs are those beliefs a person has because of events he or she has suffered. Wounded beliefs are a prevalent force in our belief system. Recognizing the wounds we have and their effects is critically important. These wounds not only interfere with our beliefs but also can lead to incorrect, inconsistent, or incomplete beliefs.

I met a woman who said to me, "If you ask me to give my life to God or to the Spirit, I will do so now. If you ask me to give my life to the Father or to Jesus, I will never do it because I will not trust my life into the hands of another man again." Her beliefs have been deeply affected by her wounds.

BOUND BELIEFS

Beliefs can also be bound. All or portions of our beliefs can certainly be held in bondage by demonic spirits. The apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:3–4, “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” This passage indicates that the evil demon has veiled belief in Christ. As a result, those whose beliefs have been bound are perishing.

Additionally, in 2 Timothy 2:24–26, Paul trains Timothy saying, “The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, *having been held captive by him to do his will*” (emphasis added). Paul is trying to show Timothy that the devil is a powerful force that can blind us from our beliefs.

When a person's beliefs are incorrect, inconsistent, incomplete, out-of-order, wounded, or bound, then no matter how consistent or sincere the practices, that person will not get the results Jesus promised. Such people may find themselves in church or reading their Bibles, believing those promised results must be for everyone else. They may find themselves trying everything harder and longer, or they may give up in their beliefs altogether, figuring that there’s something fundamentally wrong with them.

Through organics, we can show that their insufficiency is not at the level of practice but rather at the level of their beliefs. Organics helps people discover the reality of what’s going on in their spirits. Our goal as we sit at the feet of Jesus is to allow Him to clarify our beliefs for us and others. As we understand our beliefs and remove inaccuracies, we’re ready to put those beliefs into practice.

PRACTICES

Jesus has specific ways He wants us to practice our beliefs. Jesus' disciples understood this. They came to Jesus and asked Him to teach them how to pray. Jesus gave them the Lord's Prayer. He did not say to them, "Eh, it doesn't matter what you pray as long as you pray." No. Jesus gave them specific words based on specific themes. Through the Lord's Prayer, He trained His followers in the practice of prayer. Not only did Jesus teach the importance of prayer, but He also showed its importance. Jesus lived a disciplined life. In Mark 1:35, we read how Jesus regularly drew away to be by Himself with His Father. The text says, "In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, and left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there."

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructed his followers to reject the "righteousness," of the Pharisees. Jesus went on to tell his followers on the Mount that there is a correct way to practice faith. In John 5:20, Jesus practices receiving direction from His Father, "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these so that you will marvel." In John 5:39–40, He rebukes the way the Pharisees read the Scriptures. He regularly corrected their interpretive methodologies. The Holy Spirit in Luke 4:1 provides direction for Jesus. Luke 4:1–13 demonstrates Jesus' practice of Scripture study and memory.

Teachings on the correct practices of our faith are not limited to Jesus. The Apostle Paul writes in Philippians 4:9, "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." He wrote this after giving techniques in prayer to deal with anxiety in Philippians 4:4–7 and techniques for reflection in verse 8. In another place he says, "Imitate me." Not only did Paul tell us to practice and imitate, but Paul's life was also an example to others. Paul's writings are filled with technique-training for life in Christ.

Paul is not alone. All of Jesus' disciples taught specific techniques in their writings. Peter gives an excellent word for technique-training in 1 Peter 5:6–11. James' words in James 1:2–18 on trials and 4:7 on spiritual warfare are powerful. John's exhortation in 1 John 2:15–17 is equally strong.

The practices of our faith are not limited to the New Testament. Isaiah 58 is one of the pillar texts for fasting. Joshua 1 and Psalm 1 both give exhortation in meditation. Deuteronomy 6 stands out in Scripture memory. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament teach the importance of properly practicing our beliefs.

As we consider our own practices, we will be better able to see how those we're investing in practice the faith and help them mature as disciples. It will not be unusual to find practices that are consistent but incorrect, imbalanced, and/or obligatory.

CONSISTENT BUT INCORRECT

A person prays all the time but doesn't see any fruit from his or her prayers. A person studies the Word regularly but rarely hears from the Lord. A person meditates but has no transformation. Consistency is not the issue. Rather the person has not been trained in proper technique. In this case, we must avoid the error that the "right" word exists; however, a technique does exist for success, so we need to re-evaluate the technique or possibly the beliefs. Proper techniques will be discussed in later chapters of this book.

INCONSISTENT

When the Psalmist writes in Psalm 23, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," he was not describing an occasional relationship. He was describing a state of being where the Shepherd leads and the sheep follow. If I believe this, then my practices will follow. Inconsistent practices usually come from beliefs that are incorrectly prioritized. Although we may believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God is not our first priority.

OBLIGATORY

These kinds of practices are brutal. Such people practice their faith out of a sense of obligation or fear. They believe, "I guess I should read my Bible." Obligatory practices are suffocating joy-killers. Jesus does not want us to do anything for Him out of obligation. We joyfully practice our faith as a continual response to His love, presence, and work in our lives.

IMBALANCED

Imbalanced practices are particularly dangerous because they can give the illusion that you're doing what you're "supposed to be doing." For example, a person studies the Bible regularly but never engages in spiritual warfare. Another person continually sings to the Lord but rarely opens the Bible. Another person spends his or her time in devotionals but never reads the Scripture itself. Another person constantly serves but never sits still in the presence of the Lord. We need to be fully engaged in all of the practices of our faith.

As we discern the way those we're investing in practice, we may need to speak about some of these four conditions in their lives. After listening, we may say something like, "Your practices may be inconsistent." Or, "You do well in Bible study, but we need to train more in spiritual warfare." Through organics we can help them see the relationship between their inconsistency and results. The Holy Spirit is using us to connect the dots!

In the Way of Rest, we train in five specific practices:

1. Reflecting
2. Releasing
3. Receiving
4. Resisting
5. Responding

As I studied the life of Jesus and wrestled with how He could live His life as a "non-anxious" presence, I noticed that He continually exercised these five practices. Therefore, we train people in these specific techniques. Our goal is to help each person experience God's promises for his or her life in such a way that he or she can go out and confidently train others to do the same. We want our people to be able to say with Paul, "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:9).

RESULTS

Again, Jesus says in the parable of the sower in Mark 4:1–20 that the seed which falls on good soil will bear fruit, "thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold." If the soil (the condition of the heart) is right, it will bear fruit. When the Word, which is certainly good, is sewn successfully the results will be successful. When our beliefs are clear and our practices are consistent, we will have abounding stories of our Father's presence, movement, and revelation. Life in Christ will be LIFE in Christ.

Results are important to God. When Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit" in Matthew 5:3, He was not referring to blessings in Heaven when a person dies. He was referring to the availability of blessings in that day. He was not referring to the poor in spirit being blessed because they're now millionaires. He spoke to something much deeper and more substantive. He was speaking about daily results in these people's lives.

The importance of results to God is easily seen in Jesus Himself. Jesus did not come and suffer and die so that people could memorize a new set of facts. He came to change lives. He came to give people a new daily experience of life in Him. He says in John 7:38, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" Unfortunately, many people are unsuccessful in their results. In these individuals we have found six different types of unproductive responses.

RESULT-DEFINED

A person defines him- or herself by the results of his or her life. They identify themselves as a success or failure based on a history of events. This is a terrible condition, as the root of it is unstable and easily disturbed. In this a person's overall well-being is determined by their ability to get results. These people are always exhausted. There is no joy.

INHIBITED

For a variety of reasons a person is afraid or unwilling to allow him- or herself to feel great. There is an emotional dullness.

HAPPY

A person believes the prosperity gospel or some version of it. He or she believes that everything is always great, and all we have to do is smile or claim a verse and God will make everything wonderful.

PERSONALITY RESULTS

This is an interesting condition produced by a person's "natural" personality. Someone is by nature an optimist or a pessimist. They will stubbornly declare, "This is just who I am." This cuts off dependence upon God. Often, the circumstances of a person's life will exhaust their natural abilities, and they will not know how to deal with the situation. Additionally, personality results prevent people from transformational ministry because a natural optimist cannot convert a natural pessimist.

HOPELESS

These people have experienced continual disappointment so they have consigned themselves to hopelessness as a condition. Manifestations of this circumstance will be obvious.

DEMONIZED

These individuals may be dealing with various degrees of demonization. Even stories heard from Christians may be the result of demonic activity in their lives. You must consider this a strong, viable option for the condition of those you are discipling. For many of us, demons and demonization are difficult and uncertain topics. When they are soberly addressed and clearly explained in light of the overall reality of God and the condition of the world, then hopefully we can work our way to truth. We referenced one way demonic activity works in Chapter 1 and showed the ease with which a follower of Jesus can overcome their schemes. We will discuss their abilities and methods and our power over them in following chapters.

For successful results, the Way of Rest utilizes four primary promises of God for our lives today:

1. Love -
2. Freedom -
3. Rest -
4. Power -

God has given us other promises, but we are going to use these four as the foundational promises upon which we enjoy all of the other promises. As we go to make disciples, we will use these promises as barometers by which we can discern the condition of a person's relationship with God. In the same way we can discern the conditions of a person's marriage, family, and careers, we can discern the condition of a person's relationship with God. If they are not operating in these promises, then we know an issue exists either in beliefs or practices.

Jesus wants us to experience Him, His work, and His power in our lives. We should expect and look for results, and we should use our results as a way of evaluating the condition of our faith. Results can be difficult if they're misunderstood. Properly understood, they become great

barometers of our relationship with God. As we go to make disciples, we will mostly begin in the area of the results and experiences of people's lives. God will use them as windows to deeper issues of belief and practice, so that as we believe that we are the branch to Jesus' vine and practice abiding, we will experience abundant fruit. As we believe that God is the Shepherd and we are the sheep that practice following Him, we will experience His leadership. As we believe that the Holy Spirit is our power and practice exercising His power, we will experience His victory. As we believe that we live at war against sin, the world, and Satan, and we practice warfare, we will experience breakthrough. As we believe God speaks to us today and we practice being still in His presence, we will know His voice.

RESULTS AND EVANGELISM

Most of us do not readily share our faith in Jesus because we do not have regular, powerful stories of God moving. Therefore, most of us do not believe our lives are all that enviable. Subsequently, I have to ask myself, "What is so great about my life that I would want to share with someone else how to live what I am living?" Consequently, we do not share our faith.

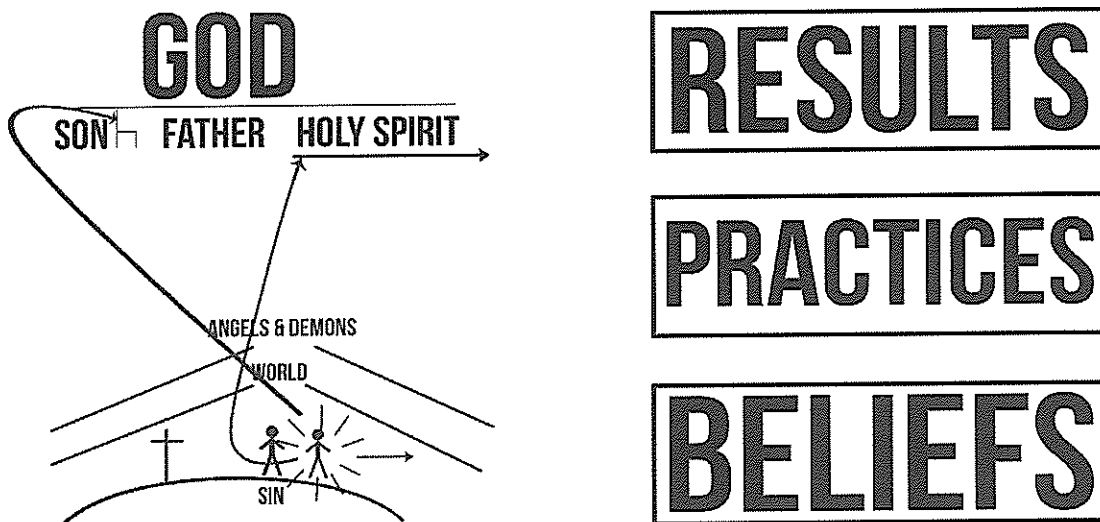
God intends that our experiences of Him will fuel our sharing about Him. In Paul's list of the armor of God in Ephesians 6:10–20, he teaches that our feet are to be fitted with the "Gospel of Peace." That means we are to have peace. We experience biblical, God-promised peace as the normal condition of our lives. Evangelism, then, is offering to others the peace, hope, love and power that I'm already living.

Jesus heals a leper in Mark 1. He commands the leper to silence, but the leper is so changed that he tells everyone about Jesus. He was not forced. Rather, his evangelism was a product of his encounter with Jesus. That encounter changed his beliefs and made necessary practicing something he had never done before: MISSIONS!

CONNECTING THE EPH 1 AND ORGANICS

Now that we understand the organic nature of beliefs, practices, and results, we need to add the Eph 1 diagram so that we can see the whole picture. These two create a framework that will help us as we make disciples who make disciples. At appropriate times in our discipleship, we will draw the Eph 1 diagram asking our disciples if they truly, deeply believe the truths given. His or her response will help us know in what direction we need to go. Many areas of bondage, confusion, incompleteness, and weakness will be exposed. We may use completely different words, narrowing in on only certain aspects or broadening to cover the big picture depending on who we are discipling. As we walk through this, the Holy Spirit is speaking to us and to our disciples, revealing what needs to be revealed.

As beliefs are clarified, practices will begin to fall in line. A disciple's practice of spiritual warfare naturally develops as their belief in two kingdoms in conflict deepens. A disciple's practice of forgiveness matures as he or she reflects more and more on the perfect love that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have for them.



As beliefs clarify and practices become increasingly consistent, a disciple will begin to experience the promised fruit in the results of their lives. Anxiety and fear are replaced with freedom and rest. Exhaustion is replaced with divine power. Chaos is replaced with order. Darkness is replaced with light. Combining the Eph 1 and organics will make discipling people easier. Discipling will not be easy, but it can be easier.

A brother in the Lord has wrestled with fear. He believes strongly in the Lord. He has recently opened his faith to embrace an active relationship with all three persons of the Trinity. However, he feels like something is still not right as he is beset with fear. As we talked, we discovered his issues came from his practices.

He believes. However, he does not regularly sit still in the presence of God and reflect on His love. This brother's practice has been limited to a quick prayer in the morning with his wife, which is usually focused on the family and work. He rarely spends time focusing on God and himself. We trained him in some new techniques that Jesus uses to be still in the Lord. He is excitedly using these new exercises and experiencing powerful results.

CONCLUSION

Man operates organically and he relates to Jesus organically. Nothing is forced. The results of our lives are a natural product of what we believe and how we practice. When we come to faith in Christ, He changes our beliefs and our practices. This combination changes the results of our lives. People walking with Jesus will have regular stories of their relationship with Him. They will not be bothered when asked, "How is your relationship with the Lord?" They will find themselves asking others the same. They will be blessed with thirty, sixty, or one-hundred-fold growth with daily stories of the Spirit moving.

As a disciple, we want to understand our own organics. Are our beliefs, practices, and results in alignment? Are we experiencing the results God promises us and Jesus secured for us? As we make disciples, we will always be working through organics, either in the background or through direct discussion. Are the issues your disciple is dealing with a belief problem, a practice problem, or some mix of both? The Eph 1 and organics are powerful tools for discernment and in leading others to healing and maturity in their relationship with God.

ORGANICS: CHAPTER WORK

Begin your work in this chapter in prayer. Thank your Father for the understanding He has given you. He wants you to have life! Alignment issues can be major, “hidden” hindrances.

1. Read Psalm 23:1 and write out the following using the work we did in John 15:5 as a template:

Beliefs:

Practices:

Experiences:

2. What should believing each aspect of the Eph 1 have on your practices?

3. What is the condition of alignment among your beliefs, practices, and results? What is your biggest alignment issue?

4. What are the steps God is leading you to take to realign your organics?

5. How do you see your alignment affecting different areas of your life (finances, friendships, marriage, parenting, etc.)?

Spend some time continuing to draw the Eph 1.