

LIVING WELL: 5 CONVERSATIONS ABOUT LIFE AND DISCERNMENT

LIVING WELL: WEEK ONE

Soul | Mind | Body | Strength |
| Heart |

“Wellness is a popular topic these days... So why is there a need for one more book about wellness? Because this book approaches wellness from a unique perspective – focusing on the integration of wellness and Christian Spirituality.”

The concept of living well in thought, word and deed is central to this book. Our thoughts, words, and deeds are all interrelated, each part affecting the others. Our thoughts influence our words and deeds. And our deeds, our actions, shape our thoughts and words. [...] Each section closes with a “Thought, Word and Deed section”. Take some time to reflect on the questions, journaling if necessary, to help you clarify. Then reflect on whether you might be called to **do** something different (in thought, word or deed) moving forward.

“There is a saying from the twelve-step movement that we have to ‘do different, to get different.’” The intention of this study is to help you reflect on your current way of doing things, in order to “get different.”

“The reality is that each of us already has a ‘living’ compass. Each of us has a compass that is directing and guiding the day-to-day decisions we make in our lives, whether we know it or not. Our compass is a combination of our beliefs, thoughts, core values, self-identity, passions, and ideals, and is always orienting our lives and daily decisions.

This series is designed to help you reflect on the compass or compasses that are orienting you in eight areas of wellness. IN each of these areas you will be invited to reflect on which compass is guiding the choices and decisions you make. [...] After you reflect on [what is] guiding your decisions, you will be asked to consider the impact on your well-being.” Is this what God wants for you? What you want for you?

- Scott Stoner (p.1-15)

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Fall 2021

How-to:

1. Find **five times to meet** with your group between September 19 and November 7. Groups should be no fewer than 2(!) and no more than 10 people.
2. **Resist the urge** to focus on “what you will get” from this small group. Instead, ask yourself how you can contribute to this group, and what God is going to do through you because of this new community.
3. **Keep in mind** that healthy small groups will develop with an **investment** of time and a collection of shared experiences, and will flourish where there is trust and grace. Earn each other's trust by keeping **confidential** the personal details people share. Extend grace and respect to one another when you disagree on theology or on another topic. It will happen, and that's okay. As business leadership author Stephen R. Covey wrote, “Strength lies in differences, not in similarities.”
4. **Pray**. Open with a check-in (a high/low from the week and/or an experience of God), so you bring all of yourselves to the meeting. Close with prayer requests for the week, that you might hold one another in prayer.
5. **Use the self-assessment** tools at the back of the book as the basis for your discussions each week.

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BOOK PAGES 1-45 Assessments Pages 155-158

SCRIPTURE:

"Go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours. At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

2 He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. 3 And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

–Matthew 17:27 - 18:5

SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Pages 19, 21, 24, 27, 30, 33, 36, 38-9, 42, 45

1. What thoughts or feelings did the Spirituality self-assessment bring up for you? The rest and play assessment?
2. Based on those assessments, is there anything different you want to do related to your spiritual wellness? Your rest and play balance?
3. Would others consider you a playful person?

FOR YOUR TIME TOGETHER:

Start by reading numbers 3-5 on the first page, and then sharing what motivated you to join this group. For this week, instead of sharing an experience of God, share the first thing that comes to mind when you think about God.

1. Read together "Faith Defined as Your Inner Compass" and "Change Your Compass, Change Your Life" on pages 14-15.
2. What would you say your "inner compass" has been throughout your life?
3. How might your life look different if you commit to making faith – that pull of God – your compass?
4. Decide which segments you want to highlight, either as a group leader, or as a group. I might suggest reflection 5 under spirituality (p.27-30) and reflections 3 and 4 under "Rest and Play".

Finish by sharing your joys and concerns with one another. Write them down if it will help you remember them. Pray over them for each other during the upcoming week.

Closing Prayer: Use either of the prayers Stoner mentions on p. 15 as your closing – or say your own!

ACTIVITY FOR REFLECTION DURING THE WEEK:

Choose one area discussed this week to "do differently" – either in thought, word, or deed. Report back next week!

