

SPRING • DECIDE & COMMIT

The Essential Few and First Steps

From the map to the first mile

Monday, March 8, 2027 • 9:00–10:30 AM • New Community Church

“Who dares despise the day of small things...?”

ZECHARIAH 4:10

This morning

Last week you saw the life you were made for: an ordinary Tuesday in 2031. This morning you **choose** it and **start** it. Almost nothing here is new. You put True North in the top pocket at Session 11, you drafted rhythms in the fall, and you wrote the vision last week. What is new is the first step, and, for the first time, a step your triad takes together.

THE PROMISE

You will leave with one page, two projects, and a date. The rest of the Charter can wait.

MOVE	WHAT HAPPENS
1 • Your Tuesday, read back	Your four closing lines and your conversation or door, in triads.
2 • Then and now	Your October gauges, read again. Then you circle three priority domains.
3 • Less, but better	Why subtraction is hard, and why it's worth it. One thing set down in each priority domain, and one permission.
4 • Build the rhythm	One practice per rhythm: daily and weekly this morning.
5 • The Bridge, one experiment	Fill in your Bridge worksheet, plank by plank, in the room. Then one piece of your Tuesday, tried for thirty days.
6 • The triad project	One outing, about three hours, together.

MOVE	WHAT HAPPENS
7 • Rope up	Mission line, experiment, and "Before Friday, I will..."
8 • Step Out	What happens next, and First Fruits.

Your First Steps Card

Everything this morning lands on the two sides of this one card. The **move number** beside each line tells you when we fill it, so don't fill ahead and don't worry about blanks. You'll also get the card on card stock for your shirt pocket. Fill this guide on screen in Adobe Reader or on paper; pencil is fine, and all of it can change at Session 14.

SIDE A • MY ESSENTIAL FEW

My mission <i>the T-shirt line • Session 11</i>	
My three priority domains <i>Move 2</i>	
One thing I am setting down in each <i>Move 3</i>	
My Rule: Daily <i>in the room • Move 4</i>	
My Rule: Weekly <i>in the room • Move 4</i>	
My Rule: Monthly <i>finish at home</i>	
My Rule: Seasonal <i>finish at home</i>	

SIDE B • FIRST STEPS

My experiment <i>Move 5</i> What I'll try • How I'll know • Starts on	
Our triad project <i>Move 6</i> What • For whom • Date • Convener	
Our check-in rhythm <i>Move 7</i>	
Before Friday, I will... <i>Move 7</i>	
First Fruits: the whole cohort reconvenes <i>Move 8</i>	

Move 1 • Your Tuesday in 2031, Read Back

You wrote the day and finished it at home. Open to §2.2. This morning, read only the four lines at the bottom of your page, then report your conversation or door.

BEFORE THE TRIADS

One moment with this week's practice, "**One level deeper.**" One moment each, no commentary.

COPY YOUR FOUR LINES HERE

Already living: the part of the page that is true of you now

Reaching for: the part your Tuesday points at, not yet here

Setting down: what you will gladly not carry up the second climb

One step this week: the step you named, and whether you took it

REPORT YOUR CONVERSATION OR DOOR

One sentence: who, and what it said about your mission. Not yet is an honest answer too. If you read your page to your wife, one more sentence: which part is she already living?

IN YOUR TRIAD

About three minutes a man. The two listeners ask **one question only**:

"Which line do you want to tell us more about?"

KEEP THE PAGE OPEN

Your Tuesday is the compass for everything this morning. Your priority domains, your subtractions and your experiment all come from this page. If you didn't finish it, read the part you have. **A half-drawn map still points north.**

Move 2 • The Weighing Page

At Session 2 you read your gauges for the first time. Read them again: not to grade the program, but to see what has moved in you.

Before you start: a low score is not a failing grade. It is the exercise working.

THEN AND NOW • EIGHT MINUTES, SILENT

1. **Find October.** Copy your two strongest and two weakest domains from the scores you read at Session 2.
2. **Re-rate today.** Gut level, 1 to 10. Don't retake the test. Ask: *where am I now, honestly?*
3. **Name the change.** One line each: what moved, and what moved it? A session, a conversation, your wife, your triad?

	DOMAIN	OCTOBER	TODAY (1-10)	WHAT CHANGED, AND WHAT HELPED?
Strongest #1				
<i>solid ground</i>				
Strongest #2				
<i>solid ground</i>				
Weakest #1				
<i>an invitation</i>				
Weakest #2				
<i>an invitation</i>				

Growth & Learning and Recreation, Adventure & Joy aren't on the assessment. Give each a one-line self-rating:

DOMAIN	TODAY (1-10)	ONE LINE
Growth & Learning		
Recreation, Adventure & Joy		

A gauge that moved is evidence the work works. **A gauge that didn't move** is information, not failure. It may be one of your priority domains.

Then turn to one man (two minutes): *"The gauge that surprised me most was..."*

The Five Weighing Questions

Pencil answers are enough. The fifth question is the one on the screen; it is the one that keeps the weighing honest, and you'll recognize it from the Galatians Test at Session 11.

What in my life has been given too much weight?

What has been given too little?

What felt essential at forty that no longer is?

What did I dismiss at forty that now matters?

What in my life would look no different if Christ were not in me?

Three domains ride heavy

Ten fruits on one tree. You cannot tend all ten at full weight this season. **Circle the three that get your best hours**, then write them on Side A of your card.

THE TEN DOMAINS	(THE HARVEST TREE FROM SESSION 1)
1 Faith & Spiritual Life	6 Service & Contribution
2 Marriage & Family	7 Growth & Learning
3 Friendships & Community	8 Recreation, Adventure & Joy
4 Health & Wellbeing	9 Finances & Stewardship
5 Identity & Purpose	10 Practical Readiness

- 1. Where does your Tuesday point?** The part you are reaching for is usually a priority domain.
- 2. Where did a gauge move, or refuse to?** The gauge that stayed low may be asking for your best hours.
- 3. The other seven ride light.** Tended, not built. Not abandoned. You water them; you don't replant them.

If the gauges and the Tuesday page disagree, let the Tuesday page win. It is your vision. And a strong domain can be a priority: you can build on solid ground.

Move 3 • Less, But Better

The Pack Test

Three moves, **in this order**. Men who select first overpack. Men who never shoulder carry alone.

MOVE	WHAT IT MEANS
1 • Subtract <i>first</i>	Set down before you pick up. Nothing new goes in until something comes out.
2 • Select <i>clear yeses only</i>	If it isn't a clear yes, it's a no. Score it; below 90, it stays home, even if it's good. True North rides in the top pocket, where you can reach it without taking the pack off.
3 • Shoulder <i>roped to other men</i>	What you cannot lift alone, the triad lifts with you (Ecclesiastes 4:12). What you should not carry at all, you lay at the cross (1 Peter 5:7).

FOUR QUESTIONS FOR ANY ITEM: A BOARD SEAT, A CONSULTING GIG, A GRUDGE, A HOBBY

1. **Does it serve the summit?** Does it move my True North or my mission: a clear yes, or a no?
2. **Is it mine to carry now?** Or is it someone younger's turn (Titus 2), or Christ's (1 Peter 5:7)?
3. **Will I be glad I carried it at Jubilee?** Will it feed someone at the summit, or only impress Basecamp?
4. **What does it cost per mile?** Thoreau: the cost of a thing is the amount of life you exchange for it.

BUNYAN'S BURDEN

In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian cannot shrug the burden off his back by effort. It falls off at the cross and rolls into the sepulchre. Some weight is not packed lighter. It is set down.

We are wired to add

Engineer Leidy Klotz and his colleagues ran eight experiments with more than 1,500 people (*Nature*, 2021). Given a wobbly Lego roof, where adding a brick cost ten cents and removing one was free and was the best fix, only **41%** thought to take one away. When a new university president asked for ideas, only **11%** of 651 suggestions proposed ending anything.

- **It is not a character flaw.** Every brain in the study defaulted to adding. You are not weak for filling the calendar. You are normal.
- **It gets worse when you are busy.** A full life hides the very option that would lighten it.

- **The cure is a question.** Someone has to ask out loud: *what could come off?*

Less, but better

Greg McKeown's *Essentialism* (2014) pictures the same energy spent two ways: a millimeter of progress in a million directions, or real progress in the one that matters most. Three truths: **trade-offs are real; if it isn't a clear yes, it's a no; if you don't prioritize your life, someone else will.** Retirement did not end the requests. It only removed the boss who used to say no for you. You cannot live every life. **Choosing the essential few is choosing your particular life.**

The second-half turn: the career question was "*What is my highest-impact use of time?*" The Jubilee question is "*What has God prepared in advance for me to do, and what must I set down to walk into it?*" (Ephesians 2:10)

What good thing in my week scores a 60, and is still there?

Mark: "If I'm not the fixer, who am I?"

Mark ran operations for forty years and retired at 62, but kept the same pack: consulting, the church committee, weighing in at the company he left. Asked "what's next?", he launched into consulting plans: same weight, smaller scale. Then someone asked, "*What would it feel like to not be the fixer for a while?*" A long quiet. "*Terrifying.*" He set most of it down. His family pushed back; some relationships recalibrated. His grandkids noticed. His wife noticed. He noticed. **The old identity was not wrong. It was finished. Setting it down was graduation.**

	THE WEIGHT	THE QUESTION THAT HIT	THE CHOICE
Mark	Identity: the fixer	"Who am I if I'm not fixing things?"	Set the fixer down; one man to mentor
David	Relationships: nine circles	"Who do you call at midnight?"	Three circles, tended deep
Tom	Achievement: still climbing	"When do you build with others?"	Redirected the ambition to building

Mark, David and Tom are composites. All three men's first impulse was to manage the weight, not reduce it. All three met pushback. And the result was not less life. It was a richer one.

What weight am I carrying because I do not yet know who I am without it?

IN THE MARGIN • ONE MINUTE • PENCIL

1. One thing I am leaving at the trailhead:

2. One thing I am carrying up, and why it passes the test:

3. One thing I will ask another man to help me carry:

Why a man does this hard thing

- **The time is finite.** An 80-year life is about 4,000 weeks (Oliver Burkeman). At seventy, the ones left would fit on a single sheet of paper. Every yes spends one of them.
- **Your yes is someone's no.** Tom's wife got three pounds of his forty. When a man does not choose, the people nearest him are subtracted by default.
- **Empty hands can receive.** Your Tuesday in 2031 cannot grow where there is no room. The lunch, the walk, the young man all need an hour something else is holding now.
- **You do not carry it alone.** What you cannot set down by effort, the triad helps you carry, and some weight you lay at the cross.

“Martha, Martha... you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

LUKE 10:41-42

WRITE IT • FOUR MINUTES • THEN COPY TO SIDE A

For each of your three priority domains, write **one thing you will set down** before you write anything you will add. Pencil. It can change at Session 14. *The throwing off comes before the running* (Hebrews 12:1).

PRIORITY DOMAIN	ONE THING I AM SETTING DOWN

You have permission

- **To rest.** An unhurried morning is not a wasted one. Rest was commanded before it was ever earned, and at Jubilee the land itself rested.
- **To spend.** Savings are for spending on what matters: a trip with her, a gift that outlives you. Many retirees regret spending too little, too late.
- **To say no.** A clear no protects the yes that matters. You do not owe every committee your Tuesday morning. (Card E7, Ask Clearly.)
- **To enjoy it.** Joy is not a wage. A morning on the water, a grandchild's laugh, a long lunch with a friend: receive it.

“Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do.”

ECCLESIASTES 9:7

WRITE IT • ONE MINUTE • THEN COPY TO SIDE A

Under your set-downs, write one permission you are giving yourself. Pencil. One is enough. Setting down makes room; permission lets you live in it.

One permission I am giving myself: _____

Move 4 • Build the Rhythm

A Rule of Life is a **trellis, not a cage**. *Regula* first meant a straight stick: the frame a vine grows along. Last week you saw the fruit. This morning you tie up the trellis, starting with what you underlined on your Tuesday.

“How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.”

ANNIE DILLARD

If you drafted rhythms in the fall, this is your first seasonal pruning. Which practice held? Which one quietly died? Keep what held. Let the dead one go without guilt. If you didn't, this is your first draft. Either way, it is a trellis, not a performance review: "Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning" (Dallas Willard).

EVERY PRACTICE GETS TWO THINGS

- **A cue:** when and where it happens.
- **A two-minute version:** what you do on the day you don't feel like it.
- Tie each line to **one of your three priority domains**, where you can.

One man's daily line: After morning coffee, sit in the red chair, read one chapter, pray for one person. Five minutes. The whole Rule has to fit on Side A of the card. If it doesn't fit, it isn't finished; make it smaller.

RHYTHM	ONE PRACTICE	CUE (WHEN • WHERE)	TWO-MINUTE VERSION	DOMAIN
Daily • in the room <i>What grounds your day?</i>				
Weekly • in the room <i>What connects you to someone, or gives something away?</i>				
Monthly • at home <i>What makes you look honestly at what happened?</i>				
Seasonal • at home <i>What will you prune, and recommit to?</i>				

If you drafted rhythms before: the practice that held • the one that quietly died

Move 5 • The Bridge, Then One Experiment

THE BRIDGE • ON YOUR WORKSHEET, IN THE ROOM

The worksheet runs from your mission to your first step, and every plank is something you already wrote: the people your mission names, your T-shirt verbs, what last week's conversation or door said, and the square on your Opportunity Map where they meet. Four minutes for planks 1 to 4, then we cross the last plank together. Your experiment and your triad project go on Side B of your card.

A prototype, not a vow. Pick one piece of your Tuesday in 2031 and try it for thirty days. You are not promising a new life. You are testing one piece of it.

What will I try? <i>One piece of the Tuesday page, small enough to start this week.</i>	
How will I know it's working? <i>Not "did I do it every day." What would be different in me, or between us?</i>	
When do I start? <i>A date, not "soon." Write it on Side B.</i>	

WHAT A GOOD EXPERIMENT LOOKS LIKE

- Lunch with a grown son every other week.
- The pack question with one young man.
- A Saturday walk with my wife, no outcome attached.
- Ask one friend the two-in-the-morning question.

WHY ONLY THIRTY DAYS?

Researchers in London found new habits take about 66 days on average to become automatic. By First Fruits you don't need a habit. **You need a start, and something you noticed.**

Move 6 • The Triad Project

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.”

HEBREWS 10:24

For twelve weeks the brotherhood has talked about things together. This is the first time it **does** something together. **One outing, about three hours.** It can happen after Session 15; the finish line is First Fruits.

THE SPRING MENU • REAL OPPORTUNITIES WITH REAL DATES

OPPORTUNITY	HOST / CONTACT	DATE(S)	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
A youth group meeting	[]	[]	One story, a coaching moment, or a panel of three men.
A mentoring morning	[]	[]	Shoulder to shoulder with a younger man, or a few.
A church need	[]	[]	A workday, or a ministry short a few hands.
A community need	Urban Impact • NCC Goes []	[]	Or a neighbor's need.
Your own idea	—	you set it	If your triad sees a need, name it.

THREE RULES

1. **Go in as a learner, too.** Ask what they could teach you.
2. **Shoulder to shoulder first.** A task together before a talk about life.
3. **No one needs to be an expert.** Show up and ask. You have practiced that for twelve weeks.

Pick the **most doable** project, not the most impressive.

BEFORE YOUR TRIAD STANDS UP, NAME FOUR THINGS

What	
For whom	
Date	
Convener <i>his only job: send the first text</i>	

Then one sentence to the room: "We're going to ___ on ___."

Move 7 • Rope Up

“A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

ECCLESIASTES 4:12

1. **Read your mission line.** The T-shirt version. Out loud.
2. **Read your experiment.** What, how you'll know, when.
3. **Listeners ask one question only:** *"What will you do the week you miss?"*
4. **Say one sentence:** *"Before Friday, I will..."* and write it on the card.

The week I miss, I will...

Before Friday, I will...

THEN, AS A TRIAD, SET YOUR CHECK-IN RHYTHM

A text every Monday morning • coffee every other week • a call the day before your project • your own. Keep it small enough to keep.

Our check-in rhythm:

Nobody leaves without a partner and a date.

Take the half-page: Stay on Your Side of the Net. It is how your triad tells a man the truth on a check-in. You use it first next Monday, on each other's Rule.

Move 8 • Plant, Tend, Check, Harvest

Not a finish line: a farmer's year. We come back to what you planted this morning three more times.

WHEN		WHAT HAPPENS
Today • Session 13	Plant	The card, the Rule, the experiment, the triad project.
Next week • Session 14	Tend	Your triad reviews your Rule: <i>"Can you really do this in two minutes?"</i> Experiment: planned, started, or done.
In two weeks • Session 15	Check	Triads report their project: the date, or the story.
A month later • First Fruits	Harvest	The whole cohort reconvenes over dinner, wives invited. Keep, change, or drop. The wives' question: <i>"What have you noticed?"</i>

Why "First Fruits"? In Leviticus 23:10 the first sheaf of the harvest was brought to the Lord before the rest came in. It honors what grew without pretending the orchard is finished.

First Fruits date and place:

THE COMPLETION RULE

Aim to finish by First Fruits. There you bring a one-page Status and Testimony: where you are in your Charter, and what has changed. No penalty for late, and none for an experiment that didn't work. "Here's what I learned" counts as a result.

Before Session 14: Carry the Card

Three things this week, with honest minutes, and your practice.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 • Start your experiment. •
about 30 min | On the date you wrote. Your first try this week. Notice one thing. |
|---|--|

2 • Copy the card into your Charter. • about 20 min	Side A and Side B go into §3.1 My First Steps and §3.2 My Rule & My Triad, the open-hand line included. Add your monthly and seasonal Rule lines as you copy; keep each small enough to do on a bad week. The ten-domain scan and the big goals in §3.1 are optional (Appendix D has the full goal templates).
3 • Fill in Charter at a Glance. • about 15 min	Page 3 of your Charter. No new writing: copy each line from the section you already wrote. Bring it to Session 14. After you write your Legacy sentence that week, add it, then hand the Glance in when you arrive at Session 15 — or email a photo by the Saturday before. The pastors read it before they bless you, and write their blessing in the box at its foot.
4 • Keep a small promise. • in your week	The Practice of the Week. Your "Before Friday" is the first one. Tick the box; bring one moment (below).
5 • Keep your check-in rhythm. • in your week	The text or the coffee your triad set at Rope Up. Small enough to keep.
6 • Convener: send the first text. • about 5 min	And confirm your project date with Dave.

7 • BRING TO SESSION 14 (LEGACY & LETTERS, MONDAY, MARCH 15)

- Your First Steps Card
- Your Charter, with §3.1 and §3.2 copied in
- Your Charter at a Glance (page 3), filled in

Your Tuesday page (§2.2), and Appendix A • Life Lessons if you wrote it

- A photo of one person you would write to

About 65 minutes this week (conveners, about 70). If you do nothing else, do the one thing you said before Friday. Later, by First Fruits: your triad project, one outing of about three hours. Not counted this week.

WHAT THESE PAGES BECOME IN YOUR HARVEST CHARTER

THIS MORNING	CHARTER
Your three priority domains and experiment	§3.1 My First Steps

THIS MORNING	CHARTER
One thing set down in each	§3.1 My First Steps (what I am setting down). The full Knapsack audit is Appendix E, optional.
One permission	§3.1 My First Steps (what I am giving myself permission for)
Your Rule (four rhythms)	§3.2 My Rule & My Triad (Appendix L • My Rule of Life for the fuller version, optional)
Your triad and its project	§3.2 My Rule & My Triad

You copy the card into §3.1 and §3.2 this week (item 2). Then Charter at a Glance, page 3, gathers one line from each section you have already written (item 3). The card stays the draft you carry in your pocket.

READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

- **Required:** Nothing required. Carry the card.
- **Books (optional):** *Essentialism*, Greg McKeown • *Subtract*, Leidy Klotz • *Range*, ch. 1, David Epstein
- **Shorter readings (WhyzMen, in your folder):** *Essentialism for the Second Half* (9 min) • *From Range to the Vital Few* (9 min) • *The Opportunity Map* (12 min) • *The Three Myths of Mentoring*, Adam Grant (4 min)

PRACTICE OF THE WEEK • KEEP A SMALL PROMISE

How: Make one small promise this week and keep it on time. From the Toolkit: 5 • Build & Host. Rooted in: Luke 16:10.

Tried it this week ☐ • **Bring one moment to the room.**

“...he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:6

You are not starting alone, and you are not finishing alone. Go take the first step.

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