

A SIX-WEEK COMPANION GUIDE

LIVING NEPHESE

Becoming Whole in Breath and Body

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Weeks One Through Six

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How to Use This Guide

This guide is your own copy to write in — space for notes, scripture reflection, and the discussion questions your group will work through together each week. Bring it to class, and keep it afterward: several weeks include a short practice to carry into the days that follow, and a closing reading pulled directly from the book to revisit on your own.

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Week 1 — You Are a Living Soul

Icebreaker — The Five Buckets

Consider the different spheres of your life. Take a few quiet moments to notice before discussing.

- Physical
 - Spiritual
 - Relationships
 - Work
 - Rest
-

Breath Prayer

Inhale: *From dust you formed me.*

Exhale: *With breath you fill me.*

What did you notice?

Scripture Exploration — Nephesh

Read together. Notice words, images, or phrases that draw your attention.

- Genesis 2:7
- Psalm 42:1
- Psalm 63:1
- Psalm 103:1
- Psalm 107:9

Observations

Integration — From Balance to Wholeness

- Where do you sense wholeness?
 - Where do you sense fragmentation?
 - What feels hopeful? What feels challenging?
-

◆ Closing Reading

It is easy to think of Eden as a place long lost, its gates sealed behind us. But perhaps Eden is not so much a place as it is a posture—a way of being. A way of breathing. A way of remembering that wholeness was our beginning. That we were not made to be fragmented, hurried, or isolated but to live integrated in the rhythm of God's own breath.

That rhythm calls to us still. Even now when our days feel scattered and our bodies tired, the invitation lingers like a fragrance on the air. It is not a call to recreate Eden by our own efforts. It is a call to return to the breath that made us. To remember that before anything broke, we were made whole.

— from Living Nephesh, Chapter 1: Breath and Dust

Practice for the Week

Each day, pause for one minute and breathe the prayer below slowly.

Inhale: *From dust you formed me.*

Exhale: *With breath you fill me.*

Week 2 — The Fracture & The False Framework

Opening Breath Prayer

Inhale: *You are near to the broken.*

Exhale: *Here I am, Lord.*

Icebreaker

When something goes wrong unexpectedly, what is your first reflex?

The Fracture — Genesis 3

Internal Disruption

- What changes internally after they eat?
 - Who names their nakedness? What does that suggest?
-

Fear & Hiding

- Where does fear first appear?
 - What does hiding accomplish? What does it cost?
-

Toll and Strain

- How does work feel different after Genesis 3?
 - Where do you experience strain, anxiety, or pressure in your vocation?
 - How does productivity shape your sense of identity?
-

Knowledge Without Capacity

- What kind of knowledge do we now carry daily?
 - How does constant information affect your body or nervous system?
-

The False Framework

Plato separated. Gnosticism spiritualized. Descartes mechanized.

- Where do you see fragmentation today?

The Clinical Gaze

- Where have you experienced being analyzed instead of known?
- Where do you see management replacing relationship?

Closing Reflection

If the fracture truly reaches this deep into the human soul...

- Where in your life are you exhausted from managing symptoms rather than receiving healing?

♦ Closing Reading

The fracture is not final. The story that began in dust and breath does not end in separation. The Breath-Giver has not abandoned His most cherished creation. Jesus shows us the fullness of God and the fullness of what it means to be human. He did not come to rescue us from embodiment but to redeem it.

The way of Jesus is incarnation, not escape. Embodied love, not disembodied striving. And through Him the invitation still stands: to be made whole again.

— from Living Nephesh, Chapter 3: The False Framework

Practice for the Week

Notice this week when you slip into managing a part of yourself instead of bringing it honestly to God. Name it — even briefly, in a word or a sentence of prayer.

Week 3 — A Return to Eden

Opening Breath Prayer

Inhale: *The Breath-Giver is near.*

Exhale: *And He makes all things whole.*

Icebreaker

What is the worst or funniest nickname you have ever heard — or been given?

Have you ever had a label follow you longer than you wanted?

Scripture

John 20:22 — ‘He breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit.’

Table Discussion

- Why might John intentionally connect this moment to Genesis?
 - What might Jesus be restoring through this act?
-

The Healing Gaze of Jesus

Mark 5:25–34 — The Woman with the Bleeding Disorder

Luke 19:1–10 — Zacchaeus

Mark 1:40–45 — The Leper

Mark 10:46–52 — Bartimaeus

Key Theme

Salvation is more than forgiveness. It is the healing of the living soul — nephesh.

Breakout Discussion

- Where in your life do you most need the gaze of Jesus — not as scrutiny but as love?
 - What parts of your life feel fractured or disconnected?
 - What might restoration look like there?
-

♦ Closing Reading

We were not made to live in pieces. We were made to live as living souls—fully human, fully known, fully whole. In Him the weight becomes light. The yoke easy. The burden no longer ours to bear alone.

This is the invitation of Jesus: to cease striving, to live fuller, to be made whole again. Receive it now.

— from Living Nephesh, Chapter 4: A Return to Eden

Practice for the Week

Practice offering someone the healing gaze of Jesus this week — full attention, without labels or agenda — in at least one conversation.

Week 4 — Discerning Disintegration

Breath Prayer

Inhale: *Search me, God.*

Exhale: *Heal my soul.*

Icebreaker

What is one small way life has felt slightly “off” lately?

Disintegration rarely appears dramatically. Often it looks like:

- fatigue without crisis
 - distance without rebellion
 - a quiet sense that something is off
-

Portraits of Disintegration

The High-Capacity Leader — still delivering and showing up, but joy has faded.

The Devoted Parent — constantly pouring out with little space to breathe.

The Perfectionist Christian — faith becomes performance rather than relationship.

Breakout Discussion

- Which portrait or description resonated most with you? Any of these, or something else?
 - Why do you think quiet drift often goes unnoticed?
 - What makes it difficult to recognize when something is off in our inner lives?
-

The Prayer of Examen

A historic Christian practice for discerning the movements of the soul.

Traditional pattern:

- Gratitude
- Presence
- Attention
- Confession and Release
- Invitation

Mini-Examen

- Where did I feel close to God today?
- Where did I resist Him?

Breakout Discussion

- What do you notice when you slow down and reflect on your day?
- Is it easier to notice where God was present or where you resisted Him?
- What makes practices like the Examen difficult in modern life?
- Could daily reflection help you recognize drift earlier?

◆ Closing Reading

In the end, discerning disintegration is not a call to hypervigilance or self-criticism. It is an invitation.

An invitation to notice—to pay attention to the small signals, the quiet longings, the places of unrest within. An invitation to yield—to lay those places before God without shame or defense, trusting that what feels like failure is often the starting point of grace. And an invitation to be restored by the gentle work of the Spirit, who brings wholeness where we have frayed—not by our striving.

This is the movement of living nephesh.

— from Living Nephesh, Chapter 6: Discerning Disintegration

Practice for the Week

Try the two Examen questions each evening this week: Where did I feel close to God today? Where did I resist Him?

Week 5 — Practicing Wholeness

Breath Prayer

Inhale: *Bless these steps, Lord.*

Exhale: *Make them faithful.*

Icebreaker

What is one small habit or rhythm that has helped you feel more like yourself at some point in your life?

Teaching Notes

We often try to change through overhaul. But: overhaul leads to overwhelm; overwhelm leads to inaction.

Wholeness grows through: small steps, steady rhythms, faithful beginnings.

Breakout Discussion

- When have you tried to “fix everything” and felt overwhelmed?
 - Why is it difficult to start small?
 - Where do you feel stuck right now?
-

Practicing Wholeness

These are not tasks to achieve. They are invitations to return.

Breath — pause, breathe, pray

Body — walk, eat with attention

Belonging — share a meal, ask meaningful questions

Becoming — journal, reflect

Blessing — encourage, pray for others

Reflection

- What stirred something in you tonight?

- What feels like an invitation — not a burden?

Breakout Discussion

- What practice are you drawn toward right now?
- Why that one?
- What would make it sustainable this week?
- Who could help you stay aware?

♦ Closing Reading

Every small act of alignment, every quiet moment of return, every breath offered in surrender—none of it is insignificant. It is all part of God's mending work in you.

Wholeness is not a finish line to cross. It is a lifelong practice: of presence, of becoming, of allowing God to restore you again and again. So as you rise, as you move into the ordinary and sacred spaces of your life, carry this truth: You are being made whole. And God, the Breath-Giver, goes with you.

— from Living Nephesh, Chapter 7: Practicing Wholeness

Practice for the Week

Name one practice — just one — that you're committing to this week.

Week 6 — Rules of Life for the Living Soul

Breath Prayer

Inhale: *You are the vine, Lord.*

Exhale: *Help me abide.*

Icebreaker — The Ideal Day

What's one thing you imagine doing in your ideal version of a really put-together day? How often does that actually happen?

From Practice to Rhythm

Last week: small, grace-filled steps. This week: giving those steps a place to live.

A rule of life is a simple rhythm that helps you return to God's design for wholeness.

The 5 Bs

- Breath — returning to God
- Body — tending your life
- Belonging — relationships
- Becoming — growth
- Blessing — outward love

Reflection

- What gave me a sense of life last week?
 - Where do I need rhythm?
 - What practice can I carry forward?
-

Your Rule of Life

Breath:

Body:

Belonging:

Becoming:

Blessing:

Discussion

- Share one or two practices.
 - Which feels natural or difficult?
 - What will help you follow through?
 - What needs flexibility?
-

♦ Closing Reading

In the end, crafting a rule of life is not a call to master our days or perfect our practices.

It is an invitation. To return. To align. To abide.

— from Living Nephesh, Chapter 8: Rules of Life for the Living Soul

Beyond This Room

This class walked through the first half of Living Nephesh. That's not the end of the book — and it doesn't have to be the end of this work.

One chapter was intentionally skipped along the way: Chapter 5, “What Is Living Nephesh?” It ties together everything covered in class as a bridge into what's ahead. Consider reading it this week, on your own, before going further.

From there, the book's third section — “The Embodiment: Living It Out” — takes everything named here and tests it against real life. You don't need a group for these chapters. You need the rule of life you just wrote. Let it be the lens you bring to each one.

Reading Ahead, On Your Own

- Chapter 5: What Is Living Nephesh? — the bridge this class skipped
- Chapter 9: Wholeness in the Presence of Others
- Chapter 10: Families as Living Souls
- Chapter 11: Becoming Whole in Suffering
- Chapter 12: Embodied Stewardship
- Chapter 13: Healing in the Field
- Chapter 14: Wholeness and Witness
- Epilogue: A Genesis Moment

Appendix C offers more room to keep shaping the rule of life you started tonight. Appendices A, B, D, and E offer further tools if you want to keep going deeper on your own.

Closing Reminder

You are learning to live a rhythm of wholeness.

About Living Nephesh

Living Nephesh explores what it means to live whole — body, soul, and spirit — in a world that often pulls us apart. Rooted in Genesis and the teachings of Jesus, the book invites us to return to the integrated life God intended, drawing from Scripture, clinical stories, and personal transformation to revive the ancient Hebrew idea of nephesh — the living soul.

Living Nephesh is available in paperback, hardcover, and Kindle wherever books are sold.

www.livingnephesh.com