



POLICING / Guided learning path: Essentials

A LITURGICAL PRAYER

Almighty God, who created us in your own image: Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice in our communities and among the nations, to the glory of your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

- *The Book of Common Prayer*

START HERE: Our favorite resources for learning about policing – if there is one item to watch, to listen to or read, you will find it below. Before you begin read our framework on page 3 to prepare your mind and heart before engaging in the topic. Scan the QDR code in the top right corner to engage with this learning path online.

If you read one article:

ARTICLE: What is Policing and How Do We Reform It |

Although on the long side this article has it all. It is a fantastic starting point to learn about policing history, what police reforms to advocate for along with a personal story that ties it all together. Ultimately it is up to us to decide whether we want a police force that “enforce(s) every law on the books by identifying and punishing any infraction” or one that “help(s) to maintain community standards of public safety and order.”

If you listen to one podcast:

PODCAST: Pastors on Policing | From body cams to why pastors should have a conversation about policing to qualified immunity to the militarization of the police pastors **Louis Love** and **Thabiti Anyabwile** engage in a wide range of topics related to policing in America. Start at 5:45 to get to the conversation.

If you watch one movie:

MOVIE: Ernie & Joe: Crisis Cops | On average police officers in academies across the United States spend 60 hours learning how to shoot a gun while spending just eight hours on mental health and communication – **Ernie Stevens** and **Joe Smarro** want to change that. Ernie and Joe: Crisis Cops provides an intimate look at the partners and best friends as they respond to mental health calls for the San Antonio Police Department’s Mental Health Unit, provide training to their fellow policemen, and navigate everyday life.

Sunday to Saturday is a Christian collaborative who have a passion for curating topics for a disillusioned church.

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<https://sundaytosaturday.com/guided-learning-paths-policing/>

If you watch one show:

SHOW: [A Conversation with the Police, Uncomfortable Conversations With a Black Man, Ep. 9](#) | Whew!

This is an intense 23 minutes. Hats off the **Emmanuel Acho** and the Petaluma Police Department for talking with each other and role modeling what it takes to make change – sitting down together and asking and answering difficult questions.

If you listen to one sermon:

SERMON: [Does the Bible Say Anything About Policing?](#) | At first glance the Bible may not have a lot to say about policing, but after learning that Roman soldiers served as a police force in Biblical times verses such as Luke 3:14 and Romans 13 take on a new meaning. Pastors **Keith Simon** and **Patrick Miller**, using chapter 2 from **Esau McCaulley's** book *Reading While Black* as a reference, engage in a nuanced conversation about defining what policing is, the mission of police officers, governmental authority, accountability and more.

If you read one book:

BOOK: [The End of Policing](#) | From rising homelessness that the police are tasked to deal with to shootings of both minorities and police officers to endless mental health issues involving both police officers and the population American police are simply expected to do too much. Author **Alex Vitale** argues that the structure of American policing, and the U.S. legal system, protects the interests of those in power and/or with money and needs to be dismantled. Simply put, Americans need to rethink the mission of the police and how we police those within the borders of the United States.

THE SUNDAY TO SATURDAY FRAMEWORK

[Our framework](#) begins with the foundational doctrine of the Imago Dei (Gen. 1:27) - that humans are unique and created in the image of God. This doctrine of respect and dignity permeates every step of Sunday to Saturday's approach to learning about a topic.

When this doctrine is applied, it forces us into tension, which then requires nuance. This tension and nuance manifests itself in a both/and worldview as opposed to an either/or worldview. For example, you can be an advocate for the police and for police reform.

The framework consists of four stages/steps: pray, learn, pause, and engage.

These four stages are not fixed and you will move back and forth from one stage to the other throughout your life. You may stay in one stage for months or even years. At other times it may be a blend of multiple stages.

The colors of each step are specifically chosen to correspond to liturgical colors. Pray and pause are purple -- purple represents preparation. Learn and engage are green -- green represents growth. Gold represents glory.



THE STAGES

1. **PRAY:** Each topic begins with a liturgical prayer that we find useful when engaging with that particular subject. When you pray, ask God to soften your heart and sharpen your mind.

GUIDING VERSE: Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know. -- Jeremiah 33:3 (NIV)

2. **LEARN:** Knowledge is power. We have already spent hundreds of hours curating content – use our [guided learning paths](#), [five questions](#), and [learning capsules](#) as starting points on your journey.

GUIDING VERSE: Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance. -- Proverbs 1:5 (NIV)

3. **PAUSE:** It is important to stop, pray, and reflect on what you have learned. Pausing should be done after each piece of media you consume, but it is also useful to stop every few weeks or months to take a break, rest, and reflect.

GUIDING VERSE: Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him and he will make your paths straight. -- Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

4. **ENGAGE:** When you feel ready, engage with neighbors, family and friends - but do not rush into this step. Know that you are going to mess up, that doesn't mean quitting, that means adjusting and probably moving back into steps 1-3 before moving back to step 4.

GUIDING VERSE: Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. -- James 1:22-25 (NIV)