



THE GATHERING WELL

# THE HEART OF KNOWING JESUS

A KNOWING JESUS GROWTH GUIDE





# THE HEART OF KNOWING JESUS

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- 02** BEGIN WITH PRAYER
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# THE HEART OF *knowing Jesus*

The Gathering Well uses these three focus areas of Spiritual Formation to support our approach to the journey of faith.



## BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Communication with God is our starting point. Any resources with this icon are designed to support and equip you to pray, using Scripture as our primary lens and providing questions and prompts to encourage you to talk with God consistently.



## STUDY THE BIBLE

All of our resources are anchored in the truth of God's Word. This icon will indicate spaces where you will engage the Scriptures. We seek to provide educational resources and tools that will help God's Word come alive to you.



## BUILD COMMUNITY

We believe that the life of faith is expressed in community, not isolation. Resources and prompts marked with this icon are geared toward reminding you that we are designed to be in relationship with God *and* with others.



# DEFINING SPIRITUAL FORMATION



It is important to know that we're all constantly being formed. The question is by whom or what are we most influenced by in that formation? In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul says that "we...beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another." This is formation we desire –**being transformed into the likeness of Jesus**, living a life that looks like His. Jesus' life reveals how **prayer**, trust in **God's promises**, and **living in relationship** with others were central to His ministry. And these same rhythms can shape how we know and follow Him today. Practices of **prayer**, **Bible study**, and **building Biblical community** are ways we actively participate in the Holy Spirit's ongoing work of **forming us into the image of Christ**.

## SPIRITUAL FORMATION

**Spiritual formation** is an ancient and historical practice of growing in understanding of faith while simultaneously being formed to be "like" the one whom we are learning and growing in understanding of or from.

*simply put.*

**Spiritual formation is being transformed by the Holy Spirit to be more like Christ so that we may follow Him and live life in Him.**

## DISCIPLESHIP

**Discipleship** is a widely used word to describe a journey of spiritual learning. It is also commonly used among modern Christians and practicing Christians to describe the state of being a disciple of Jesus.

*simply put.*

**Discipleship is following Jesus and living life in Him.**

## REFLECT

What thoughts, experiences, or influences have shaped how I define or understand these terms?

# BEGIN WITH PRAYER



## WHAT IS PRAYER?

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Prayer is an **invitation from God to commune with Him**. To 'commune' is to converse or talk together, usually with profound intensity or intimacy. It also means to interchange thoughts or feelings to be in intimate communication.

Prayer, in its simplest form, is talking to God. **But in its fullest form**, it is an invitation to a practice of immersing yourself in a deep and intimate experience of communion with God and His presence.

## HOW DO WE DO IT?

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There is no one way or perfect starting place for how to begin with prayer. As you grow in your relationship with Jesus, you will see and learn the ways in which He modeled prayer for the disciples. For now, we encourage you to consider how we pray:

### IN OUR HEARTS

We are constantly praying, even without realizing it. As we ponder, dream, and think about life on the outside, our hearts are praying on the inside. God knows the desires of our hearts (Psalm 139).

### IN OUR MINDS

We think about the world around us and ask questions. We are inclined to want to know why, how, and what it's all for or what it all means. Our minds are praying for revelation (Daniel 2:20-22).

### OUT LOUD

We use our voices to lift up the words that come to our hearts and minds as we talk to God. We pray using words that describe our fear, our doubt, our joys, and our desires. And God is listening to every word we pray (1 John 5:14).

# HOW CAN I KEEP GROWING?



## PRACTICE

Maybe you're more comfortable thinking about and engaging in prayer in your heart and mind. Maybe it's easier for you to talk to God than it is to be silent before Him to just listen. We encourage you to practice examples of prayer that are less comfortable for you and ask the Lord to teach you as you step out of your comfort zone.

Worship music can help us put words to the prayers within our hearts. Choose a worship song and write down the lyrics below as a prayer to the Lord.

Journaling can help us bring forth the prayers in our mind. Use the space below to jot down or "journal" your thoughts and bring them before the Lord today.

Choose one of your written prayers above and say it out loud before the Lord. Choose an intentional posture of kneeling, opening your hands, or lifting your eyes to the heavens.

## MAKE IT PRACTICAL

The Bible is rich with prayer. It holds examples of prayer and instructions for prayer. You can go to your Bible with a desire to learn how to pray and to grow in this practice with confidence the Lord has something to teach you. **Read Luke 11:1-4 and answer the following questions.**

What do you notice about what Jesus was doing when the disciples asked Him to teach them to pray?

What do you notice about the prayer He models for them?

Write this prayer in your own words. Be as specific as possible.

# STUDY THE BIBLE



## WHAT IS BIBLE STUDY?

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Bible study is the devotion of **time** and **attention** to the activity or process of learning about God through reading, studying, and meditating on passages of the Holy Bible (also called the Scripture or God's Word). **Bible Study is a tool** that God has given us to understand more fully the abundant life offered to us through a relationship with Jesus Christ. Whenever we approach scripture, it's important to remember that **it is a means to know Jesus more fully; it is not our finish line**. The Bible offers us a picture of God's character, a view of His redemptive plan for the world and how the constant beacon of Jesus throughout the scriptures is an anchor for our lives.

## HOW DO WE DO IT?

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Like prayer, there is no one way or perfect starting place for how to study the Bible. As you grow in your relationship with Jesus, you will see and learn the ways in which you can devote your time and attention to the process of learning about God through the Scriptures. For now, we encourage you to consider how we study:

### IN CONTEXT

Studying the Bible with a view of the grand narrative of scripture provides us with a canvas that helps us see a much bigger picture of God's Word. When we study the Bible with a narrow view of just a few verses or without a broader understanding of the text (style of writing, audience, historical considerations), we risk misinterpretation and harm.

### IN COMMUNITY

Studying the Bible alongside other people is crucial to growing in the rhythm and practice of Bible study. Your view of God's Word is brought into focus when it can be processed, challenged, and affirmed by other people who love Jesus and love you.

### WITH CONSISTENCY

Studying the Bible with consistency, regularly throughout your lifetime, helps foster the transformation of head knowledge to heart knowledge. Finding rhythms of studying God's Word on a consistent basis keeps you anchored to the constant truth that guides how you commune with God and others.

# HOW CAN I KEEP GROWING?

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## READ

If you are new to reading the Bible, start with a Bible reading plan or Bible study book. Consider the accounts of Jesus' life in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John (these narratives are known as the Gospels). If you've been studying your Bible for years, consider reading it in a new translation, chronologically, or in a version of the text that presents the scripture in its original and intended format (without all of the little numbers and headings). What is a "new to you" way that you can practice reading the Bible this week or month?

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## LISTEN

For generations, people more often listened to what was later compiled into what we read today. For generations, people groups were not taught or invited to learn to read God's Word for themselves and could only listen to or overhear it being spoken. For many, there are now hundreds of ways to listen to the Bible being read aloud. Practice both reading aloud and listening to the passage below. For listening, use a Bible reading app or website, or even record yourself reading.

**By your words I can see where I'm going; they throw a beam of light on my dark path.**

**I've committed myself and I'll never turn back from living by your righteous order.**

**Everything's falling apart on me, God; put me together again with your Word.**

**Adorn me with your finest sayings, God; teach me your holy rules.**

**My life is as close as my own hands, but I don't forget what you have revealed.**

**The wicked do their best to throw me off track, but I don't swerve an inch from your course.**

**I inherited your book on living; it's mine forever— what a gift! And how happy it makes me!**

**I concentrate on doing exactly what you say— I always have and always will.**

***Psalm 119: 105-112 MSG***



## DIG DEEPER

It can be helpful to read Bible verses in multiple translations to better understand the meaning behind them. Write Colossians 3:16 in two different translations and once in your own words in the space below.

New American Standard Bible

Amplified Bible

OWN WORDS

# BUILD COMMUNITY



## WHAT IS BIBLICAL COMMUNITY?

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Biblical community is when the design and rhythms of our lives looks like the design displayed to us in the life of Jesus Christ, His disciples, and the early church. Biblical community is often marked by five distinct characteristics: **Being comfortable in confession, being faithful in fellowship, being submitted to serving, being hopeful in hospitality and being on mission to multiply.**

## HOW DO WE DO IT?

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Like prayer and Bible study, there is no one way or perfect starting place for building community. As you grow in your relationship with Jesus, you will see and learn the ways in which He modeled living in and building community. For now, we encourage you to consider how we build community:

### LOCALLY

This means building community where you are and alongside a local church. We believe God has a plan for the places where He's placed us. We have the opportunity to intentionally pursue Biblical community right where we are.

### BIBLICALLY

We practice building community with people who know Jesus and those who don't yet know Him. Within the church, we are invited to connect with others as a family. Outside the church, we are invited to love others unconditionally as Jesus has loved us and to offer hospitality.

### WILLINGLY

We are invited to be willing to build community and live in it, even when it is challenging, inconvenient, and uncomfortable.

# HOW CAN I KEEP GROWING?



## PRAY

Use the following breath prayer to submit your understanding of building community to the Lord. Invite the Spirit to lead you in building relationships.

*breathe in:* **Lord lead me**

*breathe out:* **Into deep community.**

*breathe in:* **Lord teach me**

*breathe out:* **How to trust in Your design.**



## PRACTICE

Building community is a vulnerable practice. Letting someone in to see the motives of your heart, sharing some of the broken pieces of your life, or asking someone for help takes trust. Trusting God's design for community will be uncomfortable. And just on the other side of uncomfortable are deep relationships worth the risk.

**Think about what fears you might have about building community with those around you. Write down one fear you have and a truth from Scripture you can speak over it.**

*My Fear*

*God's Truth*

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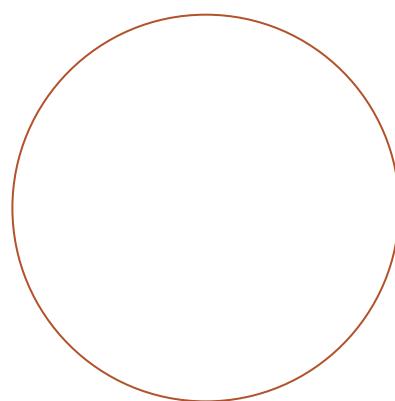
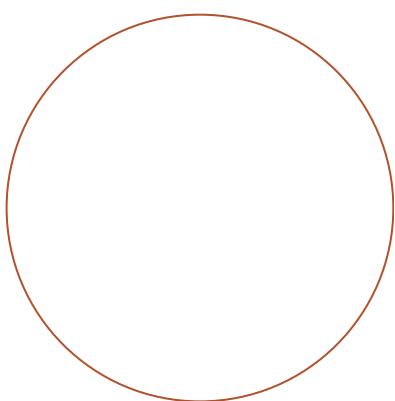
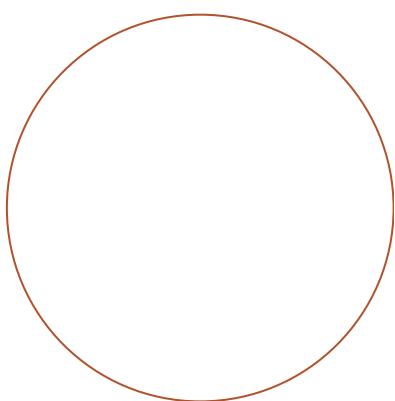


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## DIG DEEPER

Start small. Your roommate, spouse, and co-worker are all people you can begin to build community with. Think of your circles of influence. Consider three people you might be willing to connect with on a deeper level this season. Pray and ask the Spirit what next step you can take with each person (these could include inviting someone to your small group, asking for prayer, confessing sin, or making someone a meal). Write down a person and a next step in each circle.



Read Hebrews 10:19 - 25. Look for examples or declarations of community as you study the text.

# RESPONSE



Spiritual formation and discipleship are invitations from Christ to learn from Him and live life in Him. **Jesus grants us a relationship with God through His sacrifice AND invites us to follow Him and His example of living in perfect relationship with God.** Jesus models this relationship through the practices of **prayer, Bible study, and building community.** Becoming experts in these practices is not our goal. Rather, we seek to utilize these practices to be more present with Jesus and to know Him more fully.

What is a next step you can take today in light of a new or renewed understanding of prayer, Bible study or building community?



## HE SEES ME HERE

Still thinking? Still reflecting? Have questions? Here you go: use this page as you wish for your own prayers and musings.



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## THE GATHERING WELL

Helping Everyday People Become Everyday  
Leaders Who Know, Follow and Grow with Jesus.

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