

*Bayside Community Church*

# **WALKING WITH JESUS**

*A Guide to Encourage You on Your Journey with Jesus*



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# MY COMMITMENT

***Have you decided to personally accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?***

- IF YES (review pages 5 and 6).
- IF NO, which of the following statements best describes your situation?
  - I AM NOT SURE I HAVE ETERNAL LIFE AND I NEED ASSURANCE (review pages 5 and 7).
  - I HAVE WALKED AWAY FROM CHRIST AND WANT TO REDEDICATE MY LIFE TO HIM (review pages 5 and 8).
  - I WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO RECEIVE CHRIST (review pages 5 and 9).

## OUR NEED FOR SALVATION

The Bible says, "*For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard*" (**Romans 3:23**).

All people are sinners and are under God's judgment. The Bible shows this clearly, and common sense shows it as well. Though you may know many people who seem morally "better" than others, you probably don't know anyone who never makes a mistake.

The consequence of human sin is eternal separation from God, who is holy and perfect. Since God is the very source of life, eternal separation from Him means eternal death: "*For the wages of sin is death...*" (**Romans 6:23**).

Because of sin we have a problem, but the good news is He devised a plan to bridge this great gap. He invites us to receive Christ through the free gift of salvation.

# HOW TO RECEIVE CHRIST

## **1.RECOGNIZE GOD'S PLAN – LIFE AND PEACE**

The message you have heard at church stresses that God loves you and created you to know Him and experience His peace and life. The BIBLE says, "*For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life*" (*John 3:16*).

## **2.REALIZE OUR PROBLEM – SIN**

Everyone chooses to disobey God and go their own way. The result? Sin leads us away from personally knowing God, and we serve ourselves. The BIBLE says, "*For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard*" (*Romans 3:23*), and "*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord*" (*Romans 6:23*).

## **3.RESPOND TO GOD'S REMEDY – THE CROSS**

Jesus Christ is God's only provision for our sins. God sent His Son to bridge the gap. Christ did this by paying the penalty for our sins when He died on the cross and rose from the grave. The BIBLE says, "*But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners*" (*Romans 5:8*).

#### **4. RECEIVE CHRIST – AS LORD AND SAVIOR**

We must individually decide to follow Jesus and cross that bridge into God's arms by prayerfully asking Jesus Christ to come into our lives. The BIBLE says, "*But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12)*. Then we can know God personally and experience His love, as a child of God.

### **RESPOND TO GOD'S INVITATION FOR LIFE AND PEACE**

- 1. Respond to Christ's invitation to "Follow Me".**
- 2. Admit your need ("I am a sinner", "I have messed up", or "I need help").**
- 3. Be willing to turn from your sins and ask God to forgive you (this is called repentance).**
- 4. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and rose from the grave.**
- 5. Through prayer, invite Jesus Christ to come in and control your life through the Holy Spirit (receive Christ as your Lord and Savior).**

### **PRAYER OF COMMITMENT**

*Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I want to turn from my sins and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe that Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe He died for my sins and that You raised Him to life. Jesus, I want you to come into my heart and take control of my life. I want to trust You as my Savior and follow You as my Lord from this day forward. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

### **DATE OF COMMITMENT:**

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# SALVATION

## (FIRST-TIME DECISION)

**When you prayed and committed your life to Christ, what happened?**

Jesus said, "Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends" (*Revelation 3:20*).

1. What did Jesus say He would do if you asked Him into your life?

*"I will \_\_\_\_\_."*

The BIBLE says, "But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God" (*John 1:12*).

2. What happened when you received Him?

*I became one of God's \_\_\_\_\_.*

The BIBLE says, "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (*John 3:16*).

3. Now that you believe in Jesus Christ and have asked Him to forgive your sins, what can you be certain of?

*I have \_\_\_\_\_.*

### HOW DO YOU KNOW...

You are saved?  
You are a child of God?  
You have eternal life?

### I KNOW BECAUSE...

God said it in His Word, and His truth will never change.

# HOW TO BE SURE YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE

## (THIS IS CALLED ASSURANCE)

**If you have committed your life to believing in and following Christ, what does this guarantee?**

The BIBLE says, "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

1. If you believe in (or trust) Christ, what can you know with certainty?

*I have \_\_\_\_\_.*

Jesus says ... "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand" (John 10:27-29).

2. What are you promised?

*"I give them \_\_\_\_\_."*

*"And they will \_\_\_\_\_."*

*"No one can \_\_\_\_\_ them away \_\_\_\_\_."*

*"No one can \_\_\_\_\_ them from the Father's \_\_\_\_\_."*

### HOW DO YOU KNOW...

You are forgiven?  
You are cleansed?  
You are restored?

### I KNOW BECAUSE...

God said it in His Word, and His truth will never change.

# HOW TO COME BACK TO CHRIST

## (RECOMMITMENT)

**If you have walked away from following Christ and want to come back to Him, what must you do?**

1. Confess your sins.

The BIBLE says, "*But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness*" (1 John 1:9).

*What must we do to be forgiven?* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.  
*What does God say He will do if we confess?*  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Confess means to agree with God. "God, you and I know that I..." e.g., lied, cheated, was unkind, lost my temper. If your heart is telling you that you need to confess right now, be specific with God ... Silently confess your sins to Him.

2. Surrender your life to God's control.

The BIBLE says, "Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God" (Romans 6:13).

*Walking with Christ means that we should offer ourselves to* \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Ask for His strength daily to stay on God's pathway. The BIBLE says, "*For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.*" (Philippians 4:13)

- *What can you do with Christ's help?* \_\_\_\_\_
- *What is it that Christ does in us?* \_\_\_\_\_

## HOW DO YOU KNOW...

You are forgiven?  
You are cleansed?  
You are restored?

## I KNOW BECAUSE...

God said it in His  
Word, and His truth  
will never change.

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# KNOW MORE

Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).*

The BIBLE says, *"The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name" (John 20:30-31).*

A Christian is someone who believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The following are helpful steps to guide you:

1. Complete the 4-week studies in "Walking with Jesus".
2. Begin to read the gospel of John.
3. Pray daily, asking the Holy Spirit to guide you.
4. Ask others who are already Christians to help you.
5. Go to groups that help explain the Gospel. Keep coming back to church and more importantly, get involved by joining a serve team or a group.

### **Remember...**

You can receive Christ at any time by praying a prayer similar to the one on page 5.

*"Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8).*

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## **HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET**

**"Walking with Jesus"** contains four lessons based on verses from different books from the Bible. Ideally, it is meant to be reviewed as a group with a Christian leader as a guide. Together, as we meet and review this booklet, we hope to encourage you on your journey with Jesus that you have recently said "yes" to.

### **ASK**

If you are at all unclear as to what this "Gospel Message" is all about, you should find these lessons helpful. If you still have questions, you might be interested in signing up for a First Steps class to explore this booklet with a leader and others in the group.

### **READ**

You will be given scripture passages from the Bible that we encourage you to read while going through these four lessons. Many ask where to start reading the Bible, and we encourage you to get to know Jesus through the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Each Gospel gives us a glimpse of Jesus as God in the flesh. The book of John is the one we encourage you to start with.

## STUDY

Often there are a lot of questions when studying the Bible. Below we highlight what the focus is for each of the four lessons we will cover:

***Knowing Christ:*** To help you begin your new life in Christ

***Following Christ:*** To show you how to trust Jesus and continue to follow Him, even when you mess up

***Becoming Like Christ:*** To help you engage in spiritual practices that create intimacy with Jesus and help you put first things first

***Unity In Christ:*** To help you become united with and further understand the practices of the church as a community of believers

## MEMORIZE

Scripture memory is a wonderful spiritual practice to help transform us. We provide verse cards in this booklet. Detach the verse card for each lesson as you study that lesson. Carry it with you and review it often.

## REFLECT

While reading biblical passages, pause to look them up and read them reflectively a couple of times. Think deeply about the Scripture, listen to the words, and allow God to speak to you through those words. Find definitions for words or concepts that are unfamiliar. Talk about Scripture with a Christian friend. Ask God to help you understand His Word and find specific and practical ways you can apply it to your life.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bible
- Journal or Notebook - for any thoughts or questions you may want to write down

### QUICK REFERENCE TO NAVIGATING YOUR FIRST STEP BIBLE:

- Table of Contents
- Old Testament and New Testament
- Each book of the Bible is titled and divided into chapters
- Each chapter is further divided into verses

### DAILY READING OF GOD’S WORD:

- Develop a regular rhythm of meeting with God into your daily, weekly, and monthly routines. (See Appendix article “Develop Sacred Rhythms”)
- Review a Scripture passage three times meditatively, a practice that provides a way to contemplate Scripture. This postures your heart, soul, and mind to hear the whisper from the Holy Spirit, allowing you to receive an understanding of truth that will guide you in your walk with Jesus.

## ACTIVITY

At the end of each section we suggest a few spiritual practices to choose from to make application to your life. Try at least one of the practices and journal how it applies to you.

# **SESSION 1:**

***Knowing Christ***

**“THE GLORIOUS INVITATION OF  
THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE  
BECOMES CLEAR – LEARN TO  
LIVE EACH DAY WITH SIMPLE  
CONFIDENCE AS ONE OF JESUS’  
FRIENDS AND HE WILL,  
THROUGH HIS COMPANIONSHIP,  
IMPART AN ETERNAL AND  
INDESTRUCTIBLE KIND OF LIFE  
TO EACH ONE OF US.”**

**–Trevor Hudson, Beyond  
Loneliness - The Gift of God’s  
Friendship**

# SESSION 1: KNOWING CHRIST

## INTRODUCTION

*Knowing Jesus Christ* is the most exciting relationship you can have. It is the beginning of following Jesus into a life of adventure, healing, and trust in an all-loving, all-powerful God. God loves you and created you to know Him and to experience His love. It all comes through responding to the invitation to simply "follow Him".

Whether you have just become a Christian or are renewing your commitment to Christ, many exciting things are true about your relationship with Jesus! Understanding the following promises and truths found in the Bible will help you build a firm foundation on which to grow your relationship with Him.

## PROMISE 1: SALVATION - PEACE AND LIFE

The Bible talks about something called "salvation," which means being set free from the consequences of sin (eternal death), experiencing peace with God, and the assurance that we have eternal life forever with Him.

**We want you to understand that Heaven and Hell are real.** At the end of all things, everyone will experience bodily resurrection and judgment, which are described in Revelation 20:11-15 and 1 Thessalonians 4:17-18. Only those who choose to believe in the Son will enjoy eternal fellowship with God. John 3:16, perhaps the best-known verse in the Bible, explains clearly how you can have this salvation and eternal life:

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).*

“The world” includes every one of us on the face of the earth. God does love you, and the next part of the verse shows just how much He loves you: “.. that he gave his only Son...”

How did God give His Son? “*But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners*” (**Romans 5:8**). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, paid the penalty for your sins when He died on the cross. He took all your sins and died once and for all. As He died, He said, “*It is finished*” (**John 19:30**), meaning that He had truly done everything necessary for your salvation.

## **JESUS, THE TRINITY, AND HIS WORK ON THE CROSS**

“...gave his only Son...” As the Son of God, Jesus is equal to God Himself. He is part of what Christians refer to as the **Trinity**: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amazingly, even though Jesus was equal to God the Father (**John 1:1-3**), (**John 10:30**), He freely chose to become a human being and die for us (**Philippians 2:5-8**).

“...that whoever believes in Him should not perish ...” If you believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son and accept Him as your Savior, you will not have to pay the eternal penalty for your sins - because Jesus paid that penalty for you when He died on the cross.

“... but have eternal life.” Instead of eternal death and separation from God, you will have eternal life. Eternal life is a **present possession** for all who believe. Eternal life is **NOW**, not something we wait for. We can have life with Jesus now.

# BASIC TRUTHS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST AND BEGINNING YOUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

- Christ has forgiven all your sins - past, present, and future (*Colossians 1:14; 1 Peter 3:18*).
- You have become a child of God (*John 1:12*).
- Christ has come into your life and He will never leave you (*Revelation 3:20; Hebrews 13:5; John 6:37*).
- Christ has given you new life (*2 Corinthians 5:17*).
- You possess eternal life now (*John 3:16; 1 John 5:11-13*).

This salvation, and all its benefits, belong to the one who has believed and is based totally on Jesus Christ and not on your works. Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us “*You can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God.*” One of Satan’s tricks is to cause believers to doubt their salvation.

## ASSURANCE

Having assurance means “being certain with freedom from doubt.” To be assured of salvation, simply take God at His Word!

“I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so **that you may know** you have eternal life.” (*1 John 5:13*).

### HOW DO YOU KNOW...

You are forgiven?  
You are cleansed?  
You are restored?

### I KNOW BECAUSE...

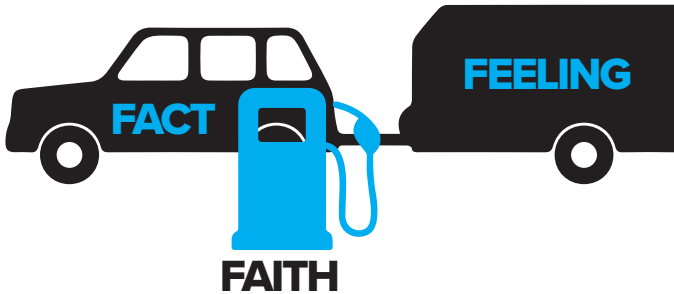
God said it in His Word, and His truth will never change.

# BASIC TRUTHS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST AND BEGINNING YOUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

As humans, our feelings (emotions) often dictate our actions, but did you know that your feelings are always following some train of thought or belief? It is up to us to make sure we are intentional about what we are following.

Doubts, questions, and varying emotions are common parts of everyone's life, but they are unreliable gauges of anyone's relationship with Christ. We are influenced by things and people every day and sometimes (without us even knowing), our feelings follow some thought that isn't a fact and we eventually have faith in that wrong thinking.

***Every feeling is based on a thought that at one point you trusted as a fact.***



For us Christians, our relationship with Christ is based on unchanging **truths**, not emotions that can change and be influenced by others daily. This diagram illustrates the relationship between **fact** (God and His Word), **faith** (your trust in God and His Word), and **feeling** (your emotions). When filled with gasoline, the van will run with or without the FEELING trailer; however, it would be useless to attempt to pull the van by the FEELING trailer.

We want to invest our trust and faith into the promises of God's Word, not our feelings. God's Word is our authority.

## PROMISE 2: GOD'S WORD NEVER FAILS

*"For the Word of God will never fail" (Luke 1:37).*

In today's culture, there is a lot of opposition to God's Word and we cannot take it for granted that most people accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God. However, many who oppose the Bible have not read the Bible for themselves, nor have they researched its reliability. (We have provided more details about the reliability of the Bible in an informative article in the Appendix called "Trusting the Bible".)

We operate from the standpoint that the Bible is reliable and trustworthy. It is one of the ways God has chosen to communicate with us so as far as our study goes, we make this the underlying assumption. If something does not make sense, ask God for clarity and seek out a person who has studied the Word of God.

## WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE HAVE TO SAY ABOUT ITSELF?

Here are some claims that the Bible makes about itself:

- ***The Word of God is a source of great encouragement (Psalm 19:8-11).*** "The commandments of the Lord are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are clear, giving insight for living. Reverence for the Lord is pure, lasting forever. The laws of the Lord are true; each one is fair. They are more desirable than gold, even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb."

- **The Word of God is instructional and can be used to teach us His ways (2 Timothy 3:16).** *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work."*
- **The Word of God exposes our innermost thoughts (Hebrews 4:12).** *"For the Word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires."*
- **The Word of God always accomplishes what is intended (Isaiah 55:11).** *"It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it."*

## THE ROLE OF GOD'S WORD

If the Bible is unreliable, you don't need to listen to it. If it is reliable, you can trust that God is speaking to you through it. If God is speaking to you in His Word, you can expect that as you read and follow the Bible, it will guide you into an intimate, loving relationship with God. This relationship is the source of what Jesus called the abundant life.

## IN SUMMARY

Briefly, a Christian believes in Jesus and seeks to follow Him daily.

If you have trusted Christ as your personal Savior, you have begun the most significant, fulfilling relationship you could experience. Regardless of your feelings, the sure promises of God found in the most remarkably preserved document of all time, the Bible, can provide confidence that Christ lives in you and that He will never leave you. This is the foundation for a growing relationship with Christ, and the beginning of **KNOWING CHRIST**.

# ACTIVITIES

**Select one of the following practices to explore:**

## SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Memorize John 3:16 (on your memory verse card) and practice it daily. Perhaps enlist the help of a friend to listen to your verses. Take God at His Word and believe He loves you and wants to have a relationship with you!

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

## CLAIMING A PROMISE

One of the best ways to grow in our relationship with the Lord is to hold onto a promise. Perhaps you need to hold onto some truth from God's Word to combat something the enemy has planted in your heart. Go to the 52 Promises of God resource in the Appendix and select a promise from God to hold for a while. Meditate on it or memorize it!

## WATER BAPTISM

There is no better time than now to follow Jesus into the waters of baptism. We invite you to enroll in our My Baptism class. To be baptized, sign-up at the website for events at your campus and continue to follow Jesus.

# **SESSION 2:**

***Following Christ***

**THOSE WHO AREN'T FOLLOWING  
JESUS AREN'T HIS FOLLOWERS.  
IT'S THAT SIMPLE. FOLLOWERS  
FOLLOW, AND THOSE WHO  
DON'T FOLLOW AREN'T  
FOLLOWERS. TO FOLLOW JESUS  
MEANS TO FOLLOW JESUS INTO  
A SOCIETY WHERE JUSTICE  
RULES, WHERE LOVE SHAPES  
EVERYTHING. TO FOLLOW JESUS  
MEANS TO TAKE UP HIS DREAM  
AND WORK FOR IT.**

– Scot McKnight, *One.Life:  
Jesus Calls, We Follow*

# SESSION 2: FOLLOWING CHRIST

## INTRODUCTION

Last week, we talked about **Knowing Christ**, some basic truths to begin our new life in Christ such as the promise of salvation, what God says is true of us, dealing with doubt, and the trustworthiness of God's Word.

This week, we continue with **Following Christ**, where we will answer how to continue to trust and follow Jesus, even when we mess up. Let's face it, we often disappoint the ones we love. None of us are perfect and we get off track. What is comforting is that our heavenly Father knows this and understands. It is the *liar of this world* who wants us to think we must live perfectly. Satan makes us believe that Christianity is all about the rules and not the relationship. However, we do not follow rules; we want to follow Jesus but sometimes it can feel like we miss Him.

## PROMISE 3: VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION

You have a real enemy and his objective for your life is to "steal, kill and destroy" (**John 10:10**) who God has called you to be. If Satan can't make you doubt your salvation, he will concentrate on some area of weakness in your life. Don't be surprised when this happens! The Bible calls him the "father of lies" and he will lie to you about your new life in Christ. When we choose to follow Jesus, we can stop listening to the Devil regarding our weaknesses and find that it is in our weakness that Jesus makes us strong (**Philippians 4:13**).

You may think you are the only one tempted, but all believers face similar tests. **Temptation is not a sin**. Even Christ was tempted (**Hebrews 4:15**). The sin comes only when you give in to the temptation.

Whenever you are tempted, take the problem to God immediately, before it has a chance to take root. Be positive in your prayers. Don't concentrate on the thing that is tempting you; instead, be thankful for the revelation of your weakness and set your mind to think about godly things:

*Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. ...thank him for all he has done... you will experience God's peace, which ...will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. ...Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise (Philippians 4:6-8).*

Ask God to bring these good experiences and thoughts into your life. Meditate on this verse below and rely on its promise to find the way of escape and look for it from God.

*The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure (1 Corinthians 10:13).*

## **PROMISE 4: FORGIVENESS**

What if we mess up? What if we could not see the way of escape, and make some wrong choices? Following Christ is like learning to walk. There will be many ups and downs. As discussed before, the Devil wants to trip you up and cause you to fall. He uses the failure to cause you to live defeated and weighed down by shame. But God has a solution for when we fall. "*The godly may trip seven times, but they will get up again ...*" (Proverbs 24:16).

When you accepted Christ you stepped into a new covenant relationship with God as your Father. The old covenant was built on the law given to Moses that no man could fulfill. But when Jesus came, Hebrews says, "*I will be their God, and they will be my people ... and I will never again remember their sins*" (**Hebrews 8:10, 12**). This is the essence of forgiveness, to not remember the sins.

The truth is the cross took care of all your sins ... past, present, and future. He has done all the work, and forgiveness is complete! "*Christ suffered for our sins once for all time ...*" (**1 Peter 3:18**). Jesus paid the ultimate price, the penalty for all our sins.

This next section shows how this new covenant works as we reflect on the distinction between **Relationship and Fellowship** and how we experience forgiveness and reconciliation.

## RELATIONSHIP VS. FELLOWSHIP

As we have discussed, sometimes we are overcome by temptation and we choose to sin, even though the truth is that sin's power has been broken in our lives. When this happens, our permanent relationship with God (as His child) is not *affected*, but our fellowship with Him is interrupted.

Think about how your RELATIONSHIP with your earthly father is permanent. No matter what, you will always be his child. But suppose you rebelled against your father and angrily left home despite his efforts to reach out to you. Your FELLOWSHIP with him would be broken.

Would you still be your father's child? Absolutely. What would happen to your fellowship with him? It needs to be repaired, right? The next step to reconcile the relationship would be in some form of an apology.

This relationship with your imperfect earthly father is a picture of how you can relate to your perfect heavenly Father. The goal is fellowship, not just a relationship.

<b>YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD</b>	<b>YOUR FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD</b>
Began when you received Christ (John 1:12-13, p. 918)	Began when you received Christ (Colossians 2:6)
Is everlasting (1 Peter 1:3-4)	Can be interrupted (Psalm 32:3-5)
Is maintained totally by God (John 10:27-29)	Is maintained in part by you, "Come near" (James 4:8)
Never changes (Deuteronomy 31:6)	Changes when you choose to live by your fleshly desires and reject His (Psalm 66:18)

***Sadly, though all Christians have an eternal relationship with God, not all Christians experience daily fellowship by following Christ.***

- For **non-believers**, sin prevents a **relationship** with God (See *Isaiah 59:2*).
- God's provision for this is the free gift of **salvation** through Christ (*Ephesians 2:8-9*).
- For **believers**, sin hinders or breaks our **fellowship** with God (*1 John 1:5-8*).
- God's provision for this is called **confession** (*1 John 1:9*).

Therefore, we need to know how to experience God's love and forgiveness through confession and repentance which allows us to get back in fellowship with Him and continue following Jesus.

## GET BACK IN FELLOWSHIP DAILY

Your relationship with God is permanent and He has completely forgiven all your sins - past, present, and future.

In the father-child illustration, what might you do to restore fellowship with your father? Most likely it would start in humility and end in an apology. Would you agree? God's provision or plan for interrupted fellowship with Him is called confession.

"But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness" (1 John 1:9).

***Confession is simply agreeing with God about our sin.***

When God brings to your attention something you have done or have thought is a sin, just confess it to Him and receive His forgiveness and grace.

Keys to a good confession:

1. Agree with God that you have sinned.
2. Thank God that He has already forgiven you.
3. Turn away from sin and trust God to change your heart (repentance).

***We call it AT&T!***

As you practice this again and again, you will come to know firsthand the mercy and forgiveness of God and the joy of following Jesus day by day.

## PROMISE 5: HIS PRESENCE THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

In today's social culture, we are more connected to others than we've ever been. Yet, reports show that people experience loneliness now more than ever. In our busy, fast-paced world, we have little time to really develop meaningful friendships. Because we are human, it would be natural to feel frustrated, weak, and alone. But you are never alone; Christ lives in you (*Colossians 1:27*), and you can experience God's presence through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit.

On the last night Jesus was with His followers, He knew their weaknesses and their need for greater spiritual strength. He wanted them to know that even though He would no longer be present with them in the flesh, the Holy Spirit (who is a part of the Trinity) would take His place and meet their every need. He gave them this promise: "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another **Counselor** to be with you forever" (*John 14:16*).

When you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit came to reside with you as Jesus promised to give you this Counselor. However, like any other counselor in our lives, if we do not commit to following His direction for us, we tend to go our own way. We need to yield ourselves to Him daily. In this way, the Holy Spirit can be your Counselor, or your Comforter. He can also be your Teacher (*John 14:26*). As you read your Bible and ask God to help you understand it, the indwelling or filling of the Holy Spirit will "guide you into all the truth" (*John 16:13*). He will also lead you (*Romans 8:14*), enrich your spiritual life (*John 6:63; Romans 8:11*), and empower you for this Christian life (*Galatians 5:16-25*). He will empower you to be a dynamic witness to others about your faith (*Acts 1:8*).

Christians are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit, which means surrendering your will to God's will (*Ephesians 5:18*).

All you need to do is confess anything that you know you need to surrender, and then ask the Holy Spirit to fill you. This is how you surrender your will to Him. As you do this, you can be assured that since He commanded this filling, He will fill you! How did you receive your salvation? By faith. How will you receive the Holy Spirit's filling? By faith. Be assured that you will experience His love, forgiveness, and presence that will transform your life every day.

Pray this simple prayer with faith:

"Holy Spirit, please fill me with Your power and strength to overcome sin and temptation in my life, and a boldness to share with others what You have done in me. Thank You that You are with me and in me, and You comfort me and guide me in the truth. In Jesus' name, Amen."

You can have these moments at any time of day as you need His guidance and power. The Holy Spirit wants to help you become who He truly knows you to be. Here are a few promises to hold in your mind to capture this truth for yourself:

*"...God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns" (Philippians 1:6).*

*"God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful" (1 Thessalonians 5:24).*

*"I will never fail you. I will never abandon you" (Hebrews 13:5).*

## IN SUMMARY

The promises of salvation - victory over temptation, forgiveness, and God's abiding presence - are yours today. As you recognize your areas of weakness, practice **confession and ask the Holy Spirit to fill you**, realizing God's presence is always with you. Believe His promises and walk in absolute dependence on His Holy Spirit.

# ACTIVITIES

**Select one of the following practices to explore:**

## SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Memorize 1 John 1:9 (on your memory verse card) and practice it daily. Take God at His Word and believe Him for forgiveness and cleansing.

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. (1 John 1:9)

## PRACTICING CONFESSION

Ask the Holy Spirit to “search you and reveal any hurt or pain in you” (Psalm 139:23-24) and show you how you may have sinned against others. Remember AT&T!

1. Agree with God that you have sinned. Try this simple practice of confession by grabbing a sheet of paper and writing down a list of all the things that come quickly to mind, like attitudes, moments of gossip, or neglecting relationships or responsibilities.

Then say a prayer of confession, agreeing with God that these were not in line with His ways.

Prayer of Confession: “Father God, I come to You humbly asking for Your forgiveness for \_\_\_\_\_(be specific). I thank You, Jesus, for Your sacrifice that covers all of my sins; past, present, and future. I receive and walk in Your forgiveness and ask for the Holy Spirit’s help to overcome this once and for all. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

2. Thank God that He has already forgiven you. At the end of your prayer, write 1 John 1:9 over the list of things and then shred it. That’s right! Tear it up and throw it away!

This shows that all your mistakes are now forgiven and forgotten in heaven. Journal how this may have made you feel.

3. Turn away from sin and trust God to change your heart (repentance).

#### Be Filled With His Spirit

Often as a follow-up to confession, it is a good practice to renew a prayer to be filled with His Spirit, especially if God revealed an area where you may need to confess. It can be like this simple prayer:

“Holy Spirit, thank you that You're with me and in me and that You comfort me and guide me in the truth. Please fill me with Your power and strength. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

Consider praying this prayer, or a similar one from your heart, the moment you wake up each day.

## PRACTICE HIS PRESENCE

Decide on an ordinary activity that you do during the day. Spend 20 minutes of that activity (i.e. doing dishes, watching TV, gardening, folding clothes, etc.) and imagine Jesus sitting or working alongside you.

- How would that conversation go?
- Are you tired?
- Do you need His strength?
- How might Jesus be speaking to you about what you are doing together?

If you enjoy journaling, write out His responses to you.

# **SESSION 3:**

***Becoming Like Christ***

**“... WE BECOME LIKE CHRIST BY DOING ONE THING-BY FOLLOWING HIM IN THE OVERALL STYLE OF LIFE HE CHOSE FOR HIMSELF. IF WE HAVE FAITH IN CHRIST, WE MUST BELIEVE THAT HE KNEW HOW TO LIVE. WE CAN, THROUGH FAITH AND GRACE, BECOME LIKE CHRIST BY PRACTICING THE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES HE ENGAGED IN, BY ARRANGING OUR WHOLE LIVES AROUND THE ACTIVITIES HE HIMSELF PRACTICED IN ORDER TO REMAIN CONSTANTLY AT HOME IN THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE FATHER.”**

**- Dallas Willard, The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God**

# SESSION 3: BECOMING LIKE CHRIST

## INTRODUCTION

Last week, we talked about **Following Christ**, victory over sin, and Satan's attempt to draw you off course. We learned that we can maintain a healthy fellowship with Christ through including Him in our everyday life, confession, and by Jesus sending us the Holy Spirit who helps us continue to follow Christ daily.

This week we want to look at the concept of **Becoming like Christ**. The goal in the Christian life is not a behavioral modification program, nor just attending church or being with a certain group of friends ... far from it! It is becoming "Christ-like" and that, in a nutshell, is all about becoming more loving.

## "CHRISTLIKENESS"

Jesus is our model for living the Christian life so it makes sense to look at His life, His teachings, and His daily practices to model our lives after Him.

Jesus tells us the greatest commandment is to "love God with all your heart, soul and strength and the second is like it, to love your neighbor as yourself" (**Mark 12:30-31**). If you look closely at all the teachings of Jesus, it is all centered around love.

Remember our first memory verse:

*"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).*

In *John 15:4*, Jesus says, "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me."

During His last meal with the disciples, He tells them about His relationship with the Father - how He remains in Him, and what He hears from the Father is what He speaks to them. In reading the Scriptures, there are countless pictures of Jesus taking time away from the group to be alone with the Father. By doing this, He shows the disciples (that includes you and me) that this must be so with them.

## PERSONAL SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

As a follower of Jesus, there are many "spiritual practices" that He modeled for us, to teach us how to remain with Him and become more like Him. As in all of our human relationships, we need to invest time to build intimacy.

## GOD WANTS TO MEET WITH YOU— JUST YOU, PERSONALLY—EACH AND EVERY DAY.

That thought may or may not amaze you, but consider it for a moment: the Holy, Perfect, and Just, God of the universe, who had not been available to us in the past, desired us. Therefore, He made a way so that He could now meet with us every day, all because of Jesus!

As we accept Jesus, we become a part of God's family. We can call on God as our Father, just as Jesus did. Jesus had oneness with God the Father, saying that He and the Father were One, displaying a **unity** and **intimacy** that is available to us as well (*John 17:21*).

Jesus tells us that in the same way He and the Father are One, He desires that we have that same sort of relationship with the Father and Himself. Listen to His prayer on the last night He spent with the Disciples - this prayer is for ALL of His followers to come!

*"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me" (John 17:20-21).*

Jesus is The Way as He shows us the way to live. He spent time with the Father in **solitude, praying, and meditating**. We know that He fasted and rested as well. **By following Jesus' example, the best way to get to know your heavenly Father is to spend time alone with Him.** We often call it "making space" for God - space in your head, your heart, your thoughts, and your home. It could be a place you go to physically or just a quiet mental space.

In that space, you can read His Word, talk with Him in prayer, or meditate on recent teachings you heard. You can pray and talk to God any time of the day - driving to work, preparing dinner, washing clothes, or studying at school - but you also need to find time to give the Lord your full attention without any distractions.

Perhaps the morning is best for you - when you are fresh and before your active day begins. Or maybe evening is best for you - at the close of the day, as you consider the next day's plans and prepare for a good night's rest. Whatever the time of day, try to be consistent in your time with God. "Jesus rose early to pray" (**Mark 1:35**) and He went somewhere quiet. What would that look like for your life?

## WHERE TO BEGIN?

There doesn't need to be any set order to your time alone with God, any more than there would be in spending time with an earthly parent or friend. The encouragement here would be to start somewhere. Here are a few practices to get you thinking about how this could look:

- Make some space in your day.
- Pray - Tell God what is on your heart, whether good or bad.
- Be in the Word - If you're unsure where to start, we encourage you to begin in the Gospels - *Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John* - to learn from Jesus.
- Reflect on one of your Scripture Memory Verses (*John 3:16, 1 John 1:9, Mark 1:35, John 17:20-21*).
- Do a Bible Study or meditate on Scripture. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal something to you.
- Reflect on who *you are becoming as you follow Jesus*.
- Pray for others.
- Pray for God's kingdom to come, and His will to be done (*Matthew 6:9-13*).

Now that we know there are some practices of Jesus we should add or apply to our lives, begin to add one, or maybe two new practices this week.

Many resources are available online, including apps that help with prayer, reading, and more. We encourage you to go slow and recognize this is a walk, not a sprint. Otherwise, you can feel overwhelmed; that is not God's design here. Take a pause to realize how the greatest relationships in your life have taken a great amount of time to develop. The same is true here as well. A gentle pace is needed, allowing one little thing to penetrate your heart daily, keeping it simple.

## THE PRACTICES ARE NOT THE END GOAL.

While we may introduce and talk about “spiritual practices” or “spiritual disciplines,” there is not one exhaustive list, nor a particular approach. Like baking a cake, certain basic ingredients will produce a common result, but each cake will be different depending on the individual baker. Likewise, the result of "spiritual practices" is to **become more like Jesus**.

Here is an example of using a "spiritual practice" to **become more like Jesus**. It could be that you naturally enjoy reading and may not need to grow in the area of reading God’s Word, but you are challenged to strengthen your prayer life. You may choose to try the practice of **prayer journaling** to help you grow in that aspect, or get a prayer partner to encourage each other in this conversational gift we have been given. As with all habits, keeping up with new routines helps us make these practices part of our natural everyday experience that moves us into being like Christ.

Also, as with anything new, be kind to yourself. God is full of grace and knows your heart's desire. Ultimately, it’s all about developing intimacy with God, that "oneness", so perhaps our failures become opportunities to experience His **grace** and grow in **trust** with Him more deeply in our hearts.

## PRAISE AND WORSHIP ARE PERSONAL PRACTICES TOO.

Next week we will talk about practices that are corporate which are designed to be enjoyed as a group, or better yet, in the church. Often, Praise and Worship are put into that category as the activities of playing, singing, and listening to music in a church service. However, we want to look at how Praise and Worship are, at its essence, a personal experience with God and not just something we do at church with others.

Praise and Worship is not just a title to be assigned to describe an activity; rather, it is a complete way of life for someone who *follows Christ*. Without both, we can't possibly be effective at being the hands and feet of God.

## PRAISE

There are two types of praise found in God's word: Thanksgiving and Testimony. In the original Greek, praise means "to sing, tell of, give, or confess." It simply means to be thankful for God's blessings and to declare that good news to God and others. Here are some examples in Scripture:

- ***Psalm 100:4*** describes how praise is the way we come into God's presence.
- ***Psalms 9:1-3***, and ***Psalm 28:2,6-7*** all describe how to praise God for what He has done for us.
- ***Psalm 79:13*** tells us to praise God by passing the knowledge of His goodness, grace, and mercy from generation to generation.
- ***1 Peter 1:7*** explains that our faith naturally leads to our praise of God.
- In ***Acts 16:25***, we see Paul and Silas praising God and witnessing to other prisoners. It is also important to note that they were praising God under horrible circumstances.

Each of these Scriptures emphasizes that praise is an outward expression, not just to God, but also to tell others how good God is. This is the true foundation of praise: Thanksgiving and Testimony. True praise comes from deep within our hearts; the outcome is that others see God working in us and something different is revealed to them about us. This is being a witness, and this is praise directed to God, made possible only by the powerful work that Jesus has done for us.

# WORSHIP

Worship is the highest form of honor and respect that we can show towards God. In both the original Greek and Hebrew, worship conveys the idea of "to prostrate oneself, to bow down, to fall face down, to pay homage and to pay respect."

*"Worship is our response both personal and corporate, to God for who He is, and what He has done; expressed in and by the things we say and the way we live."*

- Louie Giglio

Here are some examples in Scripture:

- **John 4:23-24** tells us that all may worship God and that we are to worship Him in spirit and in truth.
- **Luke 17:15-16** and **Luke 7:36-38** explain that by worshiping, we are putting God first in our lives. (This coincides with what Jesus said in **Matthew 22:35-40** when He quoted the greatest commandment from the Old Testament.)
- **Isaiah 29:13** explains the difference between worshiping by human rules as opposed to worshiping from the heart.
- **Romans 1:25** explains how we can be deceived and worship the things God has created rather than worshiping Him who is the Creator.
- **Romans 12:1** talks about how submitting to God is true and proper spiritual worship.

In the Bible, there is a huge importance placed on our worship. Why? Because you and I were created to worship and Satan would love us to direct our worship anywhere but towards God. This is why the final temptation for Jesus in the wilderness was to worship him and not God, His Father (**Matthew 4:8-10**).

# WHAT WE WORSHIP IS WHO AND WHAT WE WILL FOLLOW.

Do you know we **worship** all the time? The direction of our worship is determined by what has our heart's devotion. We can worship relationships, money, careers, and even hobbies. **Worship** is so intimate that what we choose to worship defines who we are. When you said yes to Jesus, you said yes to giving Him your heart - that includes your **worship** over anything or anyone this world has to offer. Nothing on this earth, or in our lives, should be more important than our **worship** directed to God.

**Worship** is not a style of music, but a posture of the heart. It opens the door to intimacy with God in such a way that says, "You're #1 from this day forward" and this naturally flows through our actions and words. As a result of our personal time spent in worship, our lives become a true reflection of Christ, from the inside out. This is what Jesus meant in **John 4:23** to "worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

## IN SUMMARY

The ultimate purpose of union with Christ is to become more like Him. The goal of all our activity is to grow into Christlikeness, living a life that aims to worship and glorify God, be fully devoted to Him, and love others well.

*"...love God with all your heart, soul and strength and the second is like it, to love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31).*

As we grow in intimacy with God through our personal **praise** and **worship** and the intentional time we spend with Him, others will see our lives changed. People are drawn to the light and life we now walk in. When we make ourselves available, the love of God (through the Holy Spirit) transforms us.

# ACTIVITIES

**Select one of the following practices to explore:**

## SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Memorize Mark 1:35 (on your memory verse card) and practice it daily. We grow in Christlikeness as we follow Jesus' daily practices.

Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray. (Mark 1:35)

## DESIGNATE A PLACE

Make a place in your home to have time with God. It could be a temporary place, where you set up a corner of the couch with your drink, Bible, journal, and perhaps a candle. Put a reminder on your phone calendar to be there at a consistent time. You might start with 5-10 minutes and build from there.

## START A PRAYER JOURNAL

Create a section in your journal where to list dates and specific prayer requests, and make note of how God answers your prayers and include the date. Or simply make a list of requests to remind you to pray for yourself and requests from others. Another common practice is to journal your prayers, writing out your conversations with God - you might even write out what you hear God saying to you as you pray. Your journal can be a combination of all these ways.

## SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to “pray without ceasing.” A tool like the One Minute Pause App (by John Eldredge) can help guide us in praying throughout the day. It helps reconnect us with God and has time settings from one to ten minutes. Try using it for two days, both morning and evening and see how you like it.

(In our Appendix, read *Develop Sacred Rhythms and Other Practices*, to consider other private practices. Apps like YouVersion, One Minute Pause, and Abide are great tools to guide you in this time.)

# **SESSION 4:**

***Unity of Christ***

**“SPIRITUAL FORMATION (OR DISCIPLESHIP) OCCURS PRIMARILY IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY. PEOPLE WHO REMAIN CONNECTED WITH THEIR BROTHERS AND THEIR SISTERS IN THE CHURCH, ALMOST INVARIABLY GROW IN SELF UNDERSTANDING AND THEY MATURE IN THEIR ABILITY TO RELATE IN HEALTHY WAYS TO GOD AND THEIR FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS. . . IT IS A SIMPLE, BUT A PROFOUND BIBLICAL REALITY THAT WE BOTH GROW AND THRIVE TOGETHER OR WE DO NOT GROW MUCH AT ALL.”**

**– Joseph Hellerman - When  
the Church Was a Family**

# SESSION 4: UNITY IN CHRIST

## INTRODUCTION

Last week, we discussed ***Becoming like Christ***, looking at daily habits that Jesus practiced. We learned it is not the goal to do the practices but to engage in them so that we might draw near to God and have the same type of intimacy with the Father that Jesus had. We looked at practices that might move us in that direction. We hope that with practice, and our fellowship with the Holy Spirit, we will grow into Christlikeness.

To further grow into Christlikeness, Jesus modeled how we are to unify with Him in how He unified with His disciples. This is a picture of the church and a heart that we will have for each other - ***Unity in Christ***. Christ placed us together to Live in Unity, a brotherhood/sisterhood that makes up the church. This week, we can explore our siblingship and spiritual friendships. This call will result in the world noticing how differently we, the children of God, live as an example of love, grace, and peace amidst our circumstances.

*"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples" (John 13:35).*

## DESIGNED FOR RELATIONSHIP

After years of study in the area of vulnerability, research shows that we are designed for relationships. In Okinawa Japan, believing that belonging to a group is a good practice for longevity, social workers have helped seniors get into groups of five or more. Science is discovering what God declared in ***Genesis 2:18***: "It is not good for man to be alone."

We have been focusing primarily on our individual relationship with God, but now we turn to what Jesus says about living on earth with each other, those in the family of God. If God is our Father, other believers are our siblings, right? This is Jesus' desire for us as disciples and siblings, as demonstrated in His prayer for us.

*"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me" (John 17:20-21).*

In Matthew 22:36-39, Jesus' response to the question "What is the greatest commandment?" was highly relational. He emphasized that the first commandment is to "**love God with all your heart, soul and mind,**" but the second one is like it, "**love your neighbor as yourself.**" We said "yes" to Jesus, and believing in Him established a faith that values what He values. Love and relationships are of the utmost importance to Christ, over religious piety and tradition. As we live in community with other believers, putting a high value on serving and loving, we are transformed.

If we look at the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5-7, most ideas are about loving others and living with an "**others first**" mentality. As the Gospel accounts draw to a close, we find Jesus bringing his 12 disciples close to Himself and providing a vision for how they ought to live, marked by love.

In reading and studying these passages and accounts, we know that we are not called to a life of isolation with **God**, but to a life **with others**, and to **serve others** just as Christ came to serve us. So why then is it so difficult at times to find connection?

## THE AMERICAN DILEMMA

Social scientists have a label for the lack of commitment in our society that makes it difficult for us to stay connected and grow together in community.

It is called *radical individualism*. We tend to lean into our own dreams, goals, and personal fulfillment over any interest of the group to which we belong, even our family or church. Our culture has the tendency to abandon, rather than work through, those awkward and painful relationships. We often find ourselves in this situation and sadly it frequently is even found in the church. Why? Because we are all in desperate need of Jesus each day.

American individualism, in which most of us have been raised, has brought about good things historically, but as with any strength overreached, it becomes a great weakness. In the past, American individualism was anchored in a strong sense of national pride, family values, and a life of faith. But in our modern world, it has broken free even from those strong anchors.

As we learn to follow the teachings of Jesus, He provides a way back to a sense of community. God provides a new group identity marked by Christlikeness as individuals pursue it under the umbrella of community. Just as family members learn to honor each other to keep peace in the home, we must seek the same harmony, peace, and love in our “household of faith.”

## MODEL OF A HEALTHY FAMILY

We see that God chose the family model in the Old Testament with the nation of Israel growing from one man, Abraham, and his family. All Israelites identify themselves as a descendant of one brother or another, from the great-grandson of Abraham, Jacob, who God renamed Israel. In the New Testament, Paul begins to show us that other people (referred to as Gentiles) are now included in Abraham’s family and he speaks of the Church as a brotherhood, still using a term reserved for family. Paul continues to bring forth the concept of being a community as he refers to the Church as the Body of Christ.

God refers to us as His children, and Jesus tells us that the Father desires Oneness, that the Father and He are One.

Jesus also prays that we would be one, just as the Father and Son are One, denoting relational community. Along with the high value of love, we can be certain that Christianity was not meant to be practiced alone, in a "just me and Jesus" way, but to be practiced and lived out among others.

Families provide for each other. Safety in numbers, shelter, food, companionship, and protection are all benefits of being part of a family group. There is "history", a basic understanding of the way of life you lead. There is a sense of priority with family - a sense of duty, responsibility, or obligation. There is a belonging.

The early church played out this "community life" as described in **Acts 2:42-47**:

*"All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity — all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved."*

Ideal family environments foster trust, love, and grace. These values are communicated in words and deeds. These are all characteristics of God Himself in His dealings with us personally, and they are often communicated in Scripture. As we are filled with that kind of love from God, we are expected to treat others with the same demonstration of love. ***This is the plan Christ laid out for us to follow.***

Even in the most healthy homes, conflicts arise. God knows and understands this and has provided a way back to harmony, peace, and love (see Matthew 16). God desires for us to demonstrate a different way to live and it shows up especially when things get tough.

## WHEN THINGS GET TOUGH

Author Gil Bilezikian, in his book, *Community 101*, observed, "Whenever oneness occurs, however, it swiftly comes under attack from savage anti-community forces loose in the world." It's easy to observe that Western cultures encourage leaving one another. We leave home at 18. We leave relationships that aren't easy. We leave jobs if we don't feel seen or valued. We find ourselves unwilling to open doors of healthy communication that would lead to understanding. We demand our rights and we try to stand our ground. Why? To seek justification and value.

Conflicts often begin with simple offenses that lead to complicated offenses. Siblings squabble and fight; if not properly handled, they become rivalries with grudge-holding and stone-walling silence. Fortunately, God provides us with the tools to navigate these dangerous waters. With God, we have new ways to look at these conflicts and the courage to do them the way that Jesus modeled for us.

Communication and forgiveness are the keys. We seek to understand others' perspectives and try to walk in their shoes. In Matthew 5, Jesus teaches us to be aware of an offended brother and go to be reconciled. In Matthew 18, He lays out a plan to correct a brother if an offense has occurred and with this communication, forgiveness leads to reconciliation and healing through these tough times.

## MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

God tells us we are ministers of reconciliation (**2 Corinthians 5:18**). He tells us that peacemakers will be called children of God (**Matthew 5:9**), making us most like Him. We are called to reconcile, but this does not always mean agreement and resolve.

Take a look at the difference:

- Reconciliation means re-establishing the relationship. We bury the hatchet. It means we are at peace with each other, and neither party is holding onto any hurt.

- Resolution means we resolve every disagreement. That isn't going to happen. There are some things in our relationships that we are just never going to agree on because we are all different.

**But** we can disagree without being disagreeable. That's called maturity. That's called wisdom. That's called Christlikeness - being like Christ - to disagree without being disagreeable. We can have unity without uniformity. We can walk hand in hand together without seeing eye to eye.

We can have reconciliation without a resolution. If we focus on restoring the relationship, often the issue becomes insignificant. How many of our biggest arguments were over the smallest things? We need to follow Jesus to teach us and bring us back to reconciling with those we are called to love.

## BIBLICAL CALL TO UNITY AND A BOND OF LOVE

- As mentioned above, in *John 17:20-21*, Jesus prays for us to be One as He and the Father are One. This is His prayer to the generations that follow:

*"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me."*

- Paul prays for unity in *1 Corinthians 1:10*:

*"I appeal to you, dear brothers and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in the church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose."*

Paul learned from Christ the understanding and picture of what it would look like to be in **Unity in Christ**. The outcome of gathering together in unity is that we become a reflection of how love reigns. We show the world that God forgives and lives in love. We put all that is good about God on display by the way we live in unity and harmony with one another. This happens when we enjoy the life-giving Holy Spirit as we gather together - when we share our gifts, talents, hospitality, and possessions in the form of siblingship. Consider this question of WWJD. What Would Jesus Do? It's an easy way to position yourself to be a unifier and to commit to being a proponent of unity among brothers and sisters in the church. Jesus loves you!

## HELPFUL PRACTICES

- Share each other's story.
- Practice hospitality in your home.
- Gather regularly; commanded in **Hebrews 10:25** and modeled in **Acts 2:42**. Celebrate baptisms and communion, encourage one another, and worship.
- Confess to one another (**James 5:16**) and forgive one another (**Matthew 6:16**).
- Serve one another, and together look for opportunities to share, give, pray, and receive one another.
- Learn together - about the Word, cooking, exercise, raising kids, or being an intentional spouse. Do life with one another.

Much of what it means to live this communal life is *against how we may feel*. But we can trust God, believing He will come through as we engage in our new family of God. **The challenge is to stay for a while**, through the good **and** tough times. We will grow together.

The invitation is open at Bayside. We would love to do life with you in many ways - serving on weekends, volunteering at outreaches, or participating in our groups.

## IN SUMMARY

God designed for us to be in relationship with Him and with others. God placed us into a new family of believers to practice living with and loving each other. His prayer for us is that we would love one another and live in unity. By this we show the world that God is love. This is counter cultural and we need to learn new skills and practices to live the way God wants us to live.

# ACTIVITIES

**Select one of the following practices to explore:**

## SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Memorize John 17:21 (on your memory verse card) and practice it daily. Pray with Jesus that we are one and look for opportunities to practice it!

“ I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.” (John 17:21)

## DESIGNED FOR RELATIONSHIP

After years of study in the area of vulnerability, research shows that we are designed for relationships. In Okinawa Japan, believing that belonging to a group is a good practice for longevity, social workers have helped seniors get into groups of five or more. Science is discovering what God declared in **Genesis 2:18**: “It is not good for man to be alone.”

## CELEBRATE BAPTISM

In the New Testament, baptism almost always follows accepting Christ as Lord and Savior. It is a great time to celebrate the baptism of others. We do this to welcome new or young believers and to encourage them in their step of faith. We are brothers and sisters! You are always welcome to attend and cheer them on.

## MEAL TRAIN

One of the best ways to show love is to take a meal to someone ill or facing difficulties. Also, through Bayside’s Care Department, there is a Feed the Need ministry to help bring meals to members who are not connected to a group.

Or take a meal to a new neighbor to welcome them to the neighborhood. Ask God to show you how to demonstrate His love to others in simple and practical ways right away.

## **CAMPUS OUTREACH**

Another way to demonstrate God's love to others is to share with them what you now have in Jesus. Join us in one of our local outreaches. Each campus has local outreaches into the community. Check with your campus pastor to see what outreaches are available to serve the community around your campus.

## **BRADENTON DREAM CENTER**

The Bradenton Dream Center offers a safe environment and free after-school programs for elementary children living in the downtown Bradenton area. Programs are designed to offer meaningful learning experiences for the students. Programs such as homework help, tutoring, art, and sports activities are available. If you can help with the afterschool program at the Dream Center, it will bless you and those you serve. More information is available at [thebradentondreamcenter.org](http://thebradentondreamcenter.org).

## IN SUMMARY OF THE FIRST STEP JOURNEY

We have sought to help you understand your new life in Christ that you have chosen to step into. We want you to be sure and confident in your standing as a child of God.

*"Taste and see that the Lord is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!" Psalm 34:8*

We gave you a taste, but there is still more! It takes a lifetime to explore all God has for us and it is never boring. Each era of our life brings us to discoveries and understanding of our relationship with God and each other—just as it would in any long-term relationship as it deepens. Establishing that relationship in a community of other believers brings more joy in the celebrations and more comfort in the sufferings that we experience.

This is a taste—we hope you enjoyed it, learned a few things, and experienced God in a new way. If you have not engaged with us already, we hope you might explore one of the following to begin getting connected to God's people here at Bayside:

- Get into a group for deeper study on a topic or the Bible.
- Start attending the Growth Track.
- Join a First Steps group if you did not study this booklet in one.
- Serve or volunteer at one of our weekend services at your campus or any of our local outreaches.
- Try a fun activity group and build relationships/siblingships with others.
- Seek help through our Care Department for any area of struggle. We desire to walk with you in tough times.

## **SIGN UP FOR GROWTH TRACK**



## **TAKE A LOOK AT OUR SERVING OPPORTUNITIES**



## **BROWSE OUR GROUP FINDER TO CONNECT WITH A GROUP**



# **APPENDIX**

## ***Some Tools***

**“IT ISN’T TRYING THAT GETS US  
THERE, IT’S TRAINING THAT GETS  
US THERE. AS WE TRY, WE WILL  
HAVE HIS ASSISTANCE...”**

**- Dallas Willard, Spirituality  
Made Hard**

# APPENDIX

***In the Appendix, we have provided some tools as mentioned throughout the material.***

- Trusting the Bible
- Develop Sacred Rhythms and Other Practices
- God's Promises
- The "One Anothers" of Scripture
- Next Steps
- Scripture Memory Cards

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## TRUSTING THE BIBLE

### THE RELIABILITY OF THE ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS

The Bible is unquestionably the world's all-time bestseller with an estimated 3.9 billion copies sold. The Bible was completed in its entirety nearly 2,000 years ago and stands today as the best-preserved literary work of all antiquity, with over 24,000 ancient New Testament manuscripts discovered so far (compare this with the second best-preserved literary work of all antiquity, Homer's Iliad, with only 643 preserved manuscripts discovered thus far). The printing press wasn't invented until the 1450s, but we have hand-written copies of the Old Testament dating back to the 200s BC. Remarkably, these ancient manuscripts are nearly identical to the Bible we read today.

As far as the New Testament, the Bodmer Papyrus II contains most of the Gospel of John and dates from around 150-200 AD. The Chester Beatty Papyri contains major portions of the New Testament and dates back to about 200 AD. The Codex Vaticanus, the oldest complete New Testament manuscript we've discovered so far, dates from 325-350 AD.

The apostle John, who lived with Jesus and learned from Jesus, penned five New Testament books and died in 100 AD. We have fragments of John's Gospel that date from 110-130 AD, within 30 years of his death. When compared to other ancient works such as Plato, Homer, or Tacitus, that short time period between the original and the most recent copy is dramatic!

Clement of Rome was martyred in 100 AD. In his writings, he quoted from Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts, 1 Corinthians, 1 Peter, Hebrews, and Titus. Clement's quotes totally correspond with the Bible we read today. In fact, even if we lost all of the 5,300 early Greek manuscripts, all of the 10,000 Latin vulgates, and all of the 9,300 other ancient manuscripts, we would be able to reconstruct all but 11 verses of the New Testament from the writings of the early Church leaders who quoted from them extensively. We have over 36,000 preserved quotes from the New Testament.

*Historians state that based on the large number of copies, the time span between the originals and copies, and the accuracy of the copies (99.5%), the Bible stands today as the best-preserved literary work of all antiquity, and its overall reliability is without question!*

## THE PASSION OF THE ANCIENT WRITERS

When it comes to Bible truth, many critics argue that the early Church deliberately corrupted the Bible's text for its own agenda. As for this argument, ask yourself one question: would a group of men who were willing to suffer terrible persecution and die horrible deaths in defense of the Scriptures be guilty of corrupting those very same Scriptures? If they corrupted the Scriptures or knowingly allowed them to be corrupted, that would mean they knowingly suffered and died for a lie! No one suffers and dies for a lie!

The New Testament's martyrs either saw what they claimed to see or they didn't; plain and simple. Either they interacted with the resurrected Christ or they didn't. They certainly knew whether or not their own testimony was true!

Nevertheless, these men clung to their testimonies, even to their brutal deaths at the hands of their persecutors, and despite being given every chance to recant, knowing full well whether their testimony was true or false. Why would so many men knowingly die for a lie? They had nothing to gain for lying and obviously everything to lose.

## HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

The history of the Bible starts with a phenomenal account of history! It's not one book—it's an ancient collection of writings, composed of 66 separate books, written over approximately 1,600 years, by at least 40 distinct authors. The Old Testament that contains 39 books written from approximately 1500 to 400 BC, and the New Testament contains 27 books written from approximately 40 to 90 AD. The Jewish Bible (Tanakh) is the same as the Christian Old Testament, except for its book arrangement. The original Old Testament was written mainly in Hebrew, with some Aramaic, while the original New Testament was written in common Greek.

## NAVIGATING THE BIBLE

The Bible has bound and organized all of these ancient writings into one physical book so we can easily reference them. Below is a more detailed breakdown for you to learn more about each section. The Bible books today have chapter divisions and each verse is numbered. It was not originally written this way, but all has been added to quickly reference particular sections of God's Word.

### ***Quick reference to navigating a Bible:***

- Find the Table of Contents (3rd page in Fresh Start Bible)
- 2 Major sections: Old Testament (before Jesus) and New Testament (After Jesus' birth)
- Each Bible book is titled and divided into chapters
- Each chapter is further divided into verses

# BOOKS OF THE BIBLE BREAKDOWN

## **Old Testament**

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### ***The Law***

The first five books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are called the Pentateuch. Moses is credited for writing them. It's been suggested that another person, who took over the spiritual leadership of the Israelites, completed Deuteronomy. These also contain the Law which was the covenant God made with Israel through Moses. Also included is a good deal of history plus a few speeches and songs. They cover creation, the fall, the flood, Babel, the patriarchs, the Exodus from Egypt, Sinai, the establishment of the Covenant, and the 40-year wilderness wandering.

### ***History***

The Books of History begin where the Books of the Law end. The books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth are historical documents written before the reign of King David presumably by priestly historians. They cover the conquest of the Promised Land and the period of the Judges before a king was selected.

The writers of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Esther, and Job are unnamed. These tell the story of the rise of the united kingdom, the building of the Temple, to the division of the kingdom and to the fall of the kingdom, the destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple and the Babylonian exile and ends with King Cyrus of Persia's proclamation for the exiles to return to Jerusalem. Ezra and Nehemiah, (both credited to Ezra) outlines the return from exile under Persian rule and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple.

### ***Poetry and Wisdom***

The Books of Poetry are written in Hebrew poetry rather than narrative. The Psalms were written by King David, Moses, Solomon, the sons of Korah, the sons of Asaph, and Ethan the Ezrahite. There are also some Psalms that were written anonymously.

The Wisdom books of Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes were written by King Solomon, though chapters 30 and 31 of Proverbs were written by Agur and Lemuel respectively.

### ***Prophets - Major & Minor***

Throughout their history, God spoke to His people through prophets, urging them to be faithful to God's covenant that He made with Israel through Moses. They also encouraged the people in times of distress, rebuked them in their unrighteous ways and warned them to repent as needed. You will find some of these prophets mentioned in Kings and Chronicles.

Some of the prophetic books are simply longer and are referred to as the "major" prophets. The prophetic books, referred to as the Minor Prophets, should not be seen as unimportant, they are merely shorter books. All penned their books under their names: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel are the larger books, the major prophets. While, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are the shorter books, the minor prophets. Jeremiah wrote both Lamentations and Jeremiah.

## ***New Testament*** \_\_\_\_\_

### ***The Gospels - History, Life of Jesus***

The first four books of the New Testament are the Gospels, each written by the person the book is titled after and tells the life story of Jesus. The first three Gospels -- Matthew, Mark, and Luke -- are similar in content and structure and are labeled the "Synoptic Gospels." Compared to the Synoptics, the book of John is markedly different in his approach to and organization. John, known as the Disciple that Jesus loved, also wrote 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John and the book of Revelation. Luke also wrote his gospel and the book of Acts.

### ***Acts of the Apostles - History, The Church***

The fifth book of the New Testament is Acts of the Apostles, or simply Acts. Acts is part 2 of Luke's Gospel and recounts the early history of Christianity. Both the gospel of Luke and Acts has an emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

After the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Apostles began to preach and minister throughout the region. Acts relates some of their stories and depicts the growth of the Christian church. The second half of Acts focuses on the ministry journeys of Paul, who first persecuted the believers, then encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus and becomes a missionary to the Gentiles.

### ***Paul's Epistles - Paul's Letters to Churches and Individuals***

Books 6 to 18 of the New Testament are letters, called "epistles," or the Pauline Letters written by Paul. Paul's epistles are addressed to various communities where Paul planted churches and dealt with the spiritual issues facing the church family. Some were written while he was imprisoned. The last 4 were written to individuals. These letters are: Romans, 1st & 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st & 2nd Thessalonians, 1st & 2nd Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Hebrews is often ascribed to the Apostle Paul but is generally considered to have been written anonymously.

### ***General Epistles - Letters by Others***

These are addressed to a general Christian audience, rather than the specific communities. The books were named after the authors, Peter of the Twelve Disciples. John, (the Disciple that Jesus loved, who authored the Gospel of John), James and Jude (brothers of Jesus).

### ***Revelation***

The final book of the New Testament is called the Book of Revelation, or more commonly, "Revelation." Revelation is unique in that it is the only New Testament book to focus entirely on prophetic experience. Its use of vibrant symbolism is also a distinguishing characteristic. John, the Disciple that Jesus loved, wrote Revelation.

# BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

## Old Testament - 39 Books

LAW	POETRY	MINOR PROPHETS
GENESIS	JOB	
EXODUS	PSALMS	HOSEA
LEVITICUS	PROVERBS	JOEL
NUMBERS	ECCLESIASTES	AMOS
DEUTERONOMY	SONG OF SOLOMON (SONGS)	OBADIAH
HISTORY		JONAH
JOSHUA	MAJOR PROPHETS	MICAH
JUDGES		NAHUM
RUTH	ISAIAH	HABAKKUK
1 SAMUEL	JEREMIAH	ZEPHANIAH
2 SAMUEL	LAMENTATIONS	HAGGAI
1 KINGS	EZEKIEL	ZECHARIAH
2 KINGS	DANIEL	MALACHI
1 CHRONICLES		
2 CHRONICLES		
EZRA		
NEHEMIAH		
ESTHER		

## New Testament - 27 Books

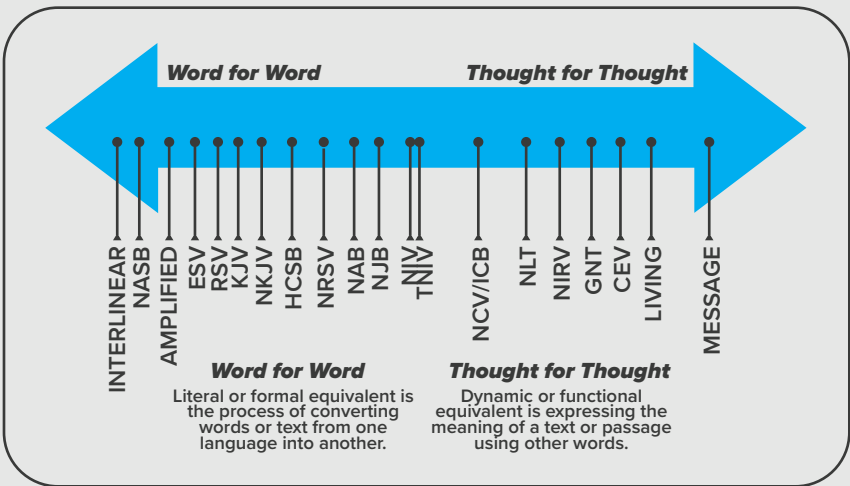
HISTORY LIFE OF JESUS	PAUL'S LETTERS TO THE CHURCH	LETTERS BY OTHERS
MATTHEW	ROMANS	HEBREWS
MARK	1 CORINTHIANS	JAMES
LUKE	2 CORINTHIANS	1 PETER
JOHN	GALATIANS	2 PETER
	EPHESIANS	1 JOHN
HISTORY OF THE CHURCH	PHILIPPIANS	2 JOHN
ACTS	COLOSSIANS	3 JOHN
	1 THESSALONIANS	JUDE
PAUL'S LETTERS TO INDIVIDUALS	2 THESSALONIANS	REVELATION
1 TIMOTHY		
2 TIMOTHY		
TITUS		
PHILEMON		

# DIFFERENT TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. The Old Testament was written in mostly Hebrew with only a very little in Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Greek and Aramaic. Hundreds of English translations have been produced since the invention of the printing press in 1440. Some of the translations remain close to and loyal to the ancient texts, however, in recent years more translations have arisen to bring ease to the reader's understanding of the English language bringing a Thought-by-Thought approach, still maintaining the original intent. The chart below shows several of the most popular English translations in use today.

The Bible Continuum moves from Word-for-Word translations from original ancient texts on the left to those translated Thought-for-Thought on the right. Word-for-Word translations are helpful for a deep study of the scriptures and the closer you move along to the right, the translations will be easier for devotional reading. If you are wondering about the translation you are reading, each Bible you read will have an introduction of how that translation came about. By using one of the Bible Apps below, you can compare and contrast a passage in several different translations to come up with the ones you prefer, keeping in mind this continuum.

## BIBLE TRANSLATION CONTINUUM



## HELPFUL BIBLE APPS

- **Holy Bible YouVersion App**
- **Blue Letter Bible App**
- **One Minute Pause App**

# DEVELOP SACRED RHYTHMS & OTHER PRACTICES

Some Christians follow the adage “Good Christians do their daily devotions.” This view puts pressure and guilt onto some people and it generates a divided view of our life with God, where I meet with God on a schedule and then go off on my merry way.

What we want to do is mark our way throughout the day where we get in touch with the Father. The “way” or method of meeting with the Father will look different depending on your personality and needs. Keep the Word of God central in expression. It might be:

- Listening to an audio Bible podcast while you clean your kitchen
- Meditating on a Scripture you’ve memorized
- Drawing a pencil sketch of an image inspired by the Word
- Sitting under a tree while you pray to be like the Psalm 1 “tree planted by the stream of water”
- Asking a friend, “How have you been blessed from a Bible passage recently?”
- Silently breathing in and out. Psalm 62:5: “Find rest, O my soul, in God alone.”

You could focus on a morning time, or add a mid-day connection, and then an evening reflection time. Perhaps at lunch, you pray for the lost, plug into the One Minute Pause App, or say the Lord’s prayer.

If you enjoy digging into the Bible, perhaps you have a study session on a Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon. Or plan a personal retreat a couple of times a year. See how much it is like nurturing a great friendship?

Jesus puts us onto God — not by giving us a program of what we should do (perform), but by caring for us and customizing a rhythm of life in a relationship with God, in a way we delight in living. We can choose from a variety of practices that draw us into His presence.

Train yourself - to sit, to read, to listen, and to pray. Start small. Expand your time as you feel comfortable and want to linger. You are in His presence. Once you sense you have met Him, let it stay with you as it spills out into words of praise to the Lord and acts of kindness to those around you.

- **Silence** - With so many distractions in our lives, sometimes taking a couple minutes to settle into silence will allow us to be still before God.
- **Solitude** - Sometimes partnered with silence, it is a time to draw away from the routine in our life and choose time alone to talk with God.
- **Simplicity** - this is about choice. We clutter our spaces and minds and schedules with things that can be a distraction from what is important to us and our values. Is it time for us to say good-bye to things in our closets, our to-do-lists, our minds, or our hearts? Releasing these distractions enables us to be able to engage with the Father and to the important people in our lives. You can enjoy things without owning them, and enjoy creation or experiences with others.
- **Giving** - Not only about giving a tithe, or gift of money, but also, about being generous with your time, your talents and skills. It is also about giving something of yourself, sharing authentically. All these acts of generosity will bless those around you and somehow it returns a blessing back to you.

- ***Fasting*** - Abstaining from eating food for spiritual reasons. Fasting is an intentional time set aside to remove food or any habit or routine that might distract us from the priority of our relationship with God. The practice of abstaining helps us to draw near to God, to surrender ourselves to Him, to hear God's direction, and to set our hearts to move toward who He wants us to be.
  
- ***Sabbath*** - God values rest and desires that you stop from what is work for you to enjoy Him and find delight in this life through Him. It is not solely about going to church or doing Bible Study, but enjoying life, time with Him, family, friends, food, and all that would bring you delight.

# 52 PROMISES OF GOD

**Claiming a promise** - One of the best ways to grow in our relationship with the Lord is to hold onto a promise. Perhaps you need to hold onto some truth from God's Word to combat something the enemy has planted in your heart. Select a promise from God to hold for a while. Meditate on it or memorize it!

1. **Answered Prayer** ISAIAH 65:24; JEREMIAH 29:12; MATTHEW 7:7-8
2. **Anger** PROVERBS 16:32; PROVERBS 19:11; EPHESIANS 4:26
3. **Busyness** JOB 36:11; PROVERBS 16:3; COLOSSIANS 4:1
4. **Children** EXODUS 20:12; EPHESIANS 6:1-3; COLOSSIANS 3:20
5. **Comfort** PSALM 46:1; PSALM 119:50; PSALM 119:92
6. **Conquering Sin** PSALM 119:11; ROMANS 6:14; JAMES 4:7
7. **Depression** PSALM 34:15, 17; PSALM 147:3; REVELATION 21:4
8. **Discouragement** PSALM 138:7; 2 CORINTHIANS 4:8-9; GALATIANS 6:9
9. **Divorce** ISAIAH 54:6; MALACHI 2:16; ROMANS 8:1
10. **Eternal Life** JOHN 3:16; JOHN 6:47; 1 JOHN 2:25
11. **Fear** DEUTERONOMY 31:6; ISAIAH 41:10; HEBREWS 13:6
12. **Finances** MATTHEW 6:8; ROMANS 8:32; PHILIPPIANS 4:19
13. **Forgiveness** MATTHEW 6:14-15; MATTHEW 18:21-22; EPHESIANS 4:32
14. **Frustration** PSALM 37:7; PSALM 55:22; ISAIAH 43:2
15. **Government** PROVERBS 16:12; PROVERBS 20:28; TITUS 3:1-2
16. **Guidance** PSALM 73:24; PSALM 107:19; PROVERBS 3:6
17. **Guilt** ISAIAH 44:22; ROMANS 8:1; 1 JOHN 3:20
18. **Husbands** PROVERBS 18:22; 1 CORINTHIANS 11:3; COLOSSIANS 3:19
19. **Illness** PSALM 30:2; PSALM 41:3; JEREMIAH 17:14
20. **Impatience** PSALM 40:1; LUKE 8:15; JAMES 1:3-4
21. **Knowing God's Will** PSALM 32:8; PSALM 62:5; PROVERBS 16:3

- 22. Loneliness** PSALM 9:10; JOHN 14:18; 1 PETER 5:7
- 23. Loving Others** MARK 12:31; JOHN 13:35; HEBREWS 13:16
- 24. Marriage** GENESIS 2:18; MATTHEW 19:6; EPHESIANS
- 25.** 4:32
- 26. Maturity** JOB 12:13; PSALM 111:10; 2 PETER 3:18
- 27. Needs** PSALM 23:1; PSALM 107:9; MATTHEW 4:4  
**Neighbors** MATTHEW 5:16; JOHN 13:34-35; ROMANS 12:15
- 28. Obedience** DEUTERONOMY 5:29; PSALM 119:2; JOHN 13:17
- 29. Old Age** PROVERBS 16:31; PROVERBS 20:29; ISAIAH 46:4
- 30. Parenting** PSALM 115:14; PSALM 127:3; JOSHUA 24:15
- 31. Peace** PSALM 119:165; ISAIAH 26:3; ISAIAH 26:12
- 32. Perseverance** PSALM 31:24; 2 TIMOTHY 1:7; HEBREWS 10:23-24
- 33. Praise** PSALM 34:1; PSALM 63:3; ISAIAH 25:1
- 34. Prayer** PSALM 55:17; JEREMIAH 33:3; 1 THESSALONIANS 5:17-18
- 35. Reading God's Word** JOSHUA 1:8; PSALM 119:11; ROMANS 10:17
- 36. Rebellion** PROVERBS 12:21; 2 CORINTHIANS 10:4; EPHESIANS 5:8
- 37. Repentance** MATTHEW 3:2; ROMANS 2:4; JAMES 4:8
- 38. Resurrection** JOHN 11:25; 2 CORINTHIANS 4:14; PHILIPPIANS 3:21
- 39. Righteousness** GENESIS 15:6; MATTHEW 6:33; 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21
- 40. Sadness** MATTHEW 5:4; JOHN 14:1; 1 CORINTHIANS 2:9
- 41. Salvation** JOHN 3:3; ROMANS 3:23; ROMANS 6:23
- 42. Satan** JAMES 4:7; 1 JOHN 4:4; REVELATION 12:11
- 43. Security** PSALM 94:18; ROMANS 8:31; HEBREWS 13:6
- 44. Sorrow** PSALM 23:4; JOHN 11:25; 1 CORINTHIANS 15:55-57
- 45. Stewardship** PROVERBS 3:9-10; MATTHEW 10:42; 2 CORINTHIANS 9:7
- 46. Storms of Life** PSALM 9:9; PSALM 46:1-2; PSALM 138:7
- 47. Strength** DEUTERONOMY 33:27; PSALM 119:28; ISAIAH 40:31
- 48. Suffering** JOHN 16:33; JAMES 1:2-3; JAMES 5:13
- 49. Temptation** 1 CORINTHIANS 10:13; HEBREWS 2:18; HEBREWS 4:15
- 50. Unsaved Friends and Family** MATTHEW 18:14; ACTS 16:31; 2 PETER 3:9
- 51. Witnessing** MATTHEW 24:14; MATTHEW 28:19-20; MARK 16:15
- 52. Wives** PROVERBS 12:4; PROVERBS 19:14; PROVERBS 31:10

# THE “ONE ANOTHERS” OF SCRIPTURE

When we use the word “Community” as in Bayside Community Church—we are just using the word as shorthand for living out all of God’s instructions for His Church. Christians don’t go to church; we are the Church. God’s people are the Church when we love and serve each other in the way God has designed us to live together.

***In the Bible, there are many passages that tell believers what we should do for one another.*** These “one another” verses can only be lived out in relationship with other believers. Since there are over 50 “one another” commands in the New Testament, it is a lot simpler just to use terms like “community” or “be the Church” to refer to them all. However, since it is also helpful to understand the biblical basis behind living in community, we want to list the verses here for reference.

## LOVE ONE ANOTHER

- John 13:34-35
- John 15:12
- John 15:17
- Romans 12:10a
- Romans 13:8
- 1 Thessalonians 3:12
- 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10
- 1 Peter 1:22
- 1 Peter 4:8
- 1 John 3:11
- 1 John 3:23
- 1 John 4:7
- 1 John 4:11-12
- 2 John 1:5

- ***Honor One Another*** Romans 12:10b
- ***Greet One Another*** Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Peter 5:14
- ***Welcome One Another*** Romans 15:7
- ***Show Hospitality to One Another*** 1 Peter 4:9
- ***Have Fellowship With One Another*** 1 John 1:7
- ***Agree With One Another*** 2 Corinthians 13:11
- ***Be at Peace With One Another*** Mark 9:50
- ***Be Kind to One Another*** Ephesians 4:32a
- ***Live in Harmony With One Another*** Romans 12:16 || Romans 15:5
- ***Forgive One Another*** Ephesians 4:32b || Colossians 3:13b

- **Bear With One Another** Colossians 3:13a
- **Bear One Another's Burdens** Galatians 6:2
- **Comfort One Another** 2 Corinthians 13:11a
- **Care for One Another** 1 Corinthians 12:25
- **Confess Sins to One Another** James 5:16a
- **Pray for One Another** James 5:16b
- **Encourage One Another** 1 Thessalonians 4:18 || 1 Thessalonians 5:11a || Hebrews 10:25
- **Build One Another Up** 1 Thessalonians 5:11b
- **Exhort One Another** Hebrews 3:13
- **Instruct One Another** Romans 15:14
- **Teach and Admonish One Another** Colossians 3:16
- **Sing With One Another** Ephesians 5:19
- **Stir Up One Another to Love and Good Works** Hebrews 10:24
- **Do Good to One Another** 1 Thessalonians 5:15
- **Serve One Another** Galatians 5:13 || 1 Peter 4:10
- **Wash One Another's Feet** John 13:14
- **Wait for One Another** 1 Corinthians 11:33
- **Be Humble Toward One Another** 1 Peter 5:5
- **Submit to One Another** Ephesians 5:21
- **Speak the Truth to One Another** Ephesians 4:25 || Colossians 3:9
- **Do Not Speak Against One Another** James 4:11 || James 5:9
- **Do Not Judge One Another** Romans 14:13
- **Do Not Provoke One Another** Galatians 5:26a
- **Do Not Envy One Another** Galatians 5:26b

Clearly, the most commonly referenced phrase in this list is “love one another,” but really all the verses are about loving one another—because love is an action and because all of God’s commands can be summarized as loving God and loving your neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 13:9-10; Galatians 5:14). Living out these verses in community is how we can love—and be loved—by one another.

# NEXT STEPS

## ***Spiritual Growth Opportunities***

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### ***Growth Track***

- My Bayside
- My Family
- My Freedom
- Connect
- Baptism

### ***Bayside Groups***

We have groups for every age group, from Bible studies to fun activities to those needing support. Check out the website to find a group!

## ***Serving Opportunities within Bayside***

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### ***Hospitality***

- Greeter/Usher
- Parking
- Café
- Safety/eCare
- Connect Center

### ***Care***

- Hospital Visits
- Memorial Team
- Prayer Team

### ***Next Gen***

- Kids
- Kids Camp
- Youth
- XII Conference
- The Collective  
Young Adults

### ***Creative Arts***

- Worship
- Production
- Creative/Media

## ***Missions***

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### ***Local***

- Campus Specific Opportunities
- Check with your Campus Pastor
- Community Partners
- Check out [mybayside.church](http://mybayside.church)
- Prison Ministry
- Bayside Dream Center

### ***Global***

Check out the website to see various mission trips available. New trips launch annually every September.



# SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSES

## SESSION 1

***John 3:16***

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

## SESSION 2

***1 John 1:9***

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

## SESSION 3

***Mark 1:35***

Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray.

## SESSION 4

***John 17:21***

I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.









