



GROWING IN CHRIST

Principles for Living with Jesus

THE WORD

"...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." - Matthew 4:4

The Importance of God's Word

"So, in order to help a new Christian grow, you must teach him the Word, share it with him, but also teach him how to dig in for himself...God wants him to grow and develop into a strong disciple of Jesus Christ who can, in turn, meet the needs of others and eventually teach them to repeat the process." ¹

1. It is necessary for personal growth.

Read Matthew 4:4, Hebrews 5:12-14, and 1 Peter 2:2.

God's Word is the _____ we need to grow.

2. It is necessary for effective Christian living. According to 2 Timothy 3:16, Scripture is profitable in four main ways:

3. It keeps us from _____ (Psalm 119:11).

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Campus Outreach Augusta
624 Greene Street
Augusta, GA 30904

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Written by Curtis Tanner and Mike Hearon.

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¹ Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*, p.65

The Hand Illustration

A simple illustration of the five ways to intake God's Word is a hand. Let's look at what each finger represents.

The Pinky Finger – hearing God's Word

1. Read Romans 10:17. Faith comes from _____ the message of Jesus Christ through his _____.
2. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13. Why did Paul thank God for these people?
3. Read Proverbs 4:20-22. What is the result of listening to God's Word?

The Ring Finger – reading God's Word

1. Read Revelation 1:3. Blessed is the one who _____ and the one who _____ and the one who _____.
2. Read Nehemiah 8:8. How did they read?

The Middle Finger – studying God's Word

1. Read Acts 17:11.

Why were the Bereans noble?

How often did they examine the Scriptures?

2. Read Ezra 7:10. Ezra had _____ his heart to _____ the Law of the Lord, and to _____ it and to _____ his statutes and rules in Israel.
3. Read 2 Timothy 4:13. What did Paul want brought to him? Why is this important?

The Index Finger – memorizing/meditating on God's Word

1. Read Psalm 119:11. What keeps us from sinning?
2. Read Psalm 1:2-3. How can we be like the tree, bearing fruit by streams of water?
3. Read Joshua 1:8. How often are we to meditate? Why are we to meditate?

The Thumb – application of God's Word

This is the most important part of the hand because without it we cannot hold onto God's Word.

1. Read John 14:21. Not only do we need to have God's Word to show our love for him, we also need to _____ it.
2. Read Matthew 7:24-27. What is he saying about obeying God?

3. Read James 1:22. Be _____ of the word, and not _____ only, deceiving yourselves.

The Results of Bible Intake

Joshua 1:8 – prosperity and success
Psalm 119:9-11 – kept from sin, purity
2 Timothy 3:16-17 – equipped for good works
2 Timothy 2:15 – not ashamed

God has given us an incredible privilege to be able to communicate with him through his Word and through prayer. Begin now to take advantage of these great resources and discover a life of intimacy with God and impact on the world.

PRAYER

"Prayer is indeed the Christian's vital breath and native air."²

Jesus' Example of Prayer

Jesus' Lifestyle of Prayer

1. Read Mark 1:35. And rising very early in the _____, while it was still dark, _____ departed and went out to a _____, and there he _____.

2. Read Luke 5:16. Jesus _____ often.

3. Read Luke 6:12. Jesus _____ all night.

4. Read John 17. This is a prayer that Jesus prayed the night before his death. Who did he pray for?

v. 1-5 Jesus prayed for _____

v. 6-19 Jesus prayed for his _____

v. 20-23 Jesus prayed for the _____

Jesus' Pattern for Prayer

Look at Jesus' pattern in Matthew 6:9-13.

1. How does the prayer begin? Why is this important?

2. Which requests are God-centered (v. 9-10)?

3. Which requests are man-centered (v. 11-13)?

4. In what specific ways can this pattern for praying help you pray?

The Basic Elements of Prayer

The basic elements of prayer can be remembered by the acronym "ACTS", which is comprised of the first letters of the following words. Write a brief definition for each.

Adoration

Confession

Thanksgiving

Supplication

The Practice of Prayer

1. What conditions make for effective prayer?

Matthew 21:22

John 15:7

John 16:24

2. What conditions hinder prayer?

Psalms 66:18

James 4:3

3. What are the key characteristics of effective prayer?

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Luke 18:1

Colossians 4:2

James 5:16

4. Decide on a plan for your prayer life, such as the ACTS acrostic, so that you can first meet with God daily, then bring your requests before him (Psalm 5:3).

Results of Prayer

1. Read Jeremiah 33:3. What happens when you pray?

2. Read James 5:16. What happens when you pray?

3. Read Philippians 4:6-7. What happens when you pray?

“We cannot learn about prayer except by praying.” - J. Oswald Sanders³

“The great people of the earth today are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor yet those who can explain about prayer; but I mean these people who take time and pray. They have not time. It must be taken from something else. - S.D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Prayer*⁴

THE CHURCH

God has created only two institutions on this earth, marriage and the church. He holds both in the highest regard. In fact, the church is defined as “the living body of Christ”, of which Christ is the head. To live a fruitful Christian life, we must understand God’s purpose for the church and our role in it.

Defining the Church

Who or what is the church?

The Body of Christ

1. The church is also called the _____ (Colossians 1:18, 24).
2. Who then is the body of Christ? In Ephesians 4:11-12 we find it is all of God’s _____.

God’s Family

1. The church is also referred to as _____
_____ (1 Timothy 3:15).
2. God tells us that true disciples, or followers of Christ, are his children in his household. See Hebrews 3:6, John 1:12-13, Romans 8:14-17, and Galatians 3:7.
3. The church, therefore, is every true _____ of Jesus Christ.

The Purpose of the Church

How does it work?

Edification

1. The first primary function of the church is the edification (building up) of the body. Look up “edify” in a dictionary and define it in your own words below.

2. The book of Acts gives us the best picture of a healthy, local, church body. Read Acts 2:42-47. Record the different aspects of their life mentioned in 2:42.

3. The goal of fellowship is _____ (Ephesians 4:13, John 17:23, Romans 15:5).

4. We are to be one in _____ and _____. (Philippians 2:2).

5. We are to _____ ourselves to the leadership of the church (Hebrews 13:17) and to _____ as well (Ephesians 5:21).

Evangelism

The other primary function of the church is the evangelization of the lost world.

1. Jesus’ last instructions before he ascended into heaven are found in Matthew 28:18-20. What is their assignment?

2. Jesus’ last instructions to the church are found in Acts 1:8. What was the church’s mission?

You and the Church

One Body, Many Parts, and Your Part

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. Summarize this passage in a simple sentence or two.

2. Every believer has one or more spiritual _____ (Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:4). You should discover yours and _____ it to serve others (1 Peter 4:10).

Finding the Right Church

You should find a church that:

1. Teaches sound _____ (Titus 1:9, 2 Timothy 4:3-4, and Titus 2:1)

2. Effectively reaches _____ with the gospel (Colossians 4:4-6, Acts 5:42, 1 Thessalonians 1:8)

3. Engages in true _____ (Ephesians 5:19-21)

4. Ministers to the _____ (James 1:27)

FELLOW- SHIP

*"Behold, how good and pleasant it is when
brothers dwell in unity." - Psalm 133:1*

What is Biblical Fellowship?

1. Read 1 John 1:3.

What was the author's purpose for proclaiming what he had seen and heard?

With whom did he have fellowship?

2. "Fellowship" is derived from the Greek word "koinonia", which means "sharing in common". As you examine the verses below, determine what you can share with others.

1 Peter 1:22

Galatians 6:2

Galatians 6:6

3. In the first-century church in Acts 2:42-47, you can see fellowship at its best.

What were they devoting themselves to?

All those that had believed were together and had all things in common. What specifically did they have in common?

What was the result of that kind of fellowship?

4. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-15.

Can a Christian have biblical fellowship with a non-Christian?

In light of this verse, what should your relationship with non-Christians be based upon?

The Purpose of Fellowship - Edification Encouragement and Stimulation

1. Study Hebrews 10:24-25

As Christians, what are we to take time to "stir up one another" to?

How can you do this to Christians around you?

2. Examine Hebrews 3:13.
How should Christians encourage one another?

Why is that so important?

Do you consistently encourage other believers?

Accountability

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:21 and Ephesians 5:21. Who are we answerable to as Christians?

2. Read Galatians 6:1-2 and Luke 17:3-4. What are our responsibilities to those living in sin?

3. Read Proverbs 13:18 and Proverbs 15:31. How should we receive correction from a brother or sister in Christ?

Fellowship Killers

1. Selfishness - Philippians 2:3-4
2. The Tongue - James 3:1-12, Ephesians 4:29
3. Not Forgiving - Matthew 18:21-22, 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

"...complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind." - Philippians 2:2

EVANGELISM

*"We are driven to action daily with the knowledge that three billion people do not know our Savior. Our passion in life, our unquenchable desire, is to take God's love to them."*⁵

We have been given the greatest cure know to mankind. Jesus Christ has given us the cure for sin by paying for our sin and giving us a relationship with Him. Imagine that you had the cure for AIDS, one of the world's deadliest diseases. Would you keep it to yourself? Would you use it for your own healing and no one else's? Or would you share it with the world and let them experience life again? As bad as AIDS is, sin is worse. Thousands of people each day die without knowing Christ!

The Definition of Evangelism

Evangelism is "taking the initiative to share Christ (Ephesians 6:19-20, Mark 16:15) in the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) and leaving the results to God (1 Corinthians 3:6-7)."⁶

Why Share the Gospel?

There Is a Need

1. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9. What will happen to those who "do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus"?

2. Read Matthew 9:36. What are two conditions of people who do not know God? _____ and _____

⁵ Gordon Aeschliman, "We Are World Christians!"

⁶ Adapted from Bill Bright, *Transferable Concept: How You Can Be A Fruitful Witness*

There Is a Command

1. Read Romans 10:14. What is the implied command from this verse?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 9:16. Is sharing the gospel an option for Christians? _____

3. Read Acts 1:8. What did Christ say we would do?

4. Read Matthew 28:19. What does God command us to do?

There Are Examples

1. Jesus - John 4:7-15

Who is Jesus sharing with?

What is unique about who He is sharing with?

2. Philip - Acts 8:26-31

Who is Philip sharing with?

In v. 31, the Ethiopian eunuch has a need. He says he needs someone to _____ him.

Why is this important?

3. Paul - Colossians 1:28-29

There is a key word in v. 28. Paul says, "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching _____ with all wisdom, that we may present _____ mature in Christ."

According to this verse, who are we to tell about Jesus?

4. Paul - 1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

What two things did Paul share with the Thessalonians?

Why are both important?

5. The Church - Acts 5:42

When did the apostles proclaim the good news?

Where did they proclaim it?

What do you learn from their example?

The Results of Sharing the Gospel

1. The world will _____ you (John 16:33).
2. You will please _____ (1 Thessalonians 2:4).
3. You will receive personal _____ and fulfillment (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20).
4. _____ will come to know Christ (Acts 2:41, 47).

Barriers to Sharing the Gospel

Here are three common areas that keep believers from sharing the gospel.

Man's Reaction

Fear
Pride
Persecution

God's Response

2 Timothy 1:7-8
Romans 1:16
2 Timothy 3:12

List other reasons you may be kept from becoming effective and consistent in evangelism:

